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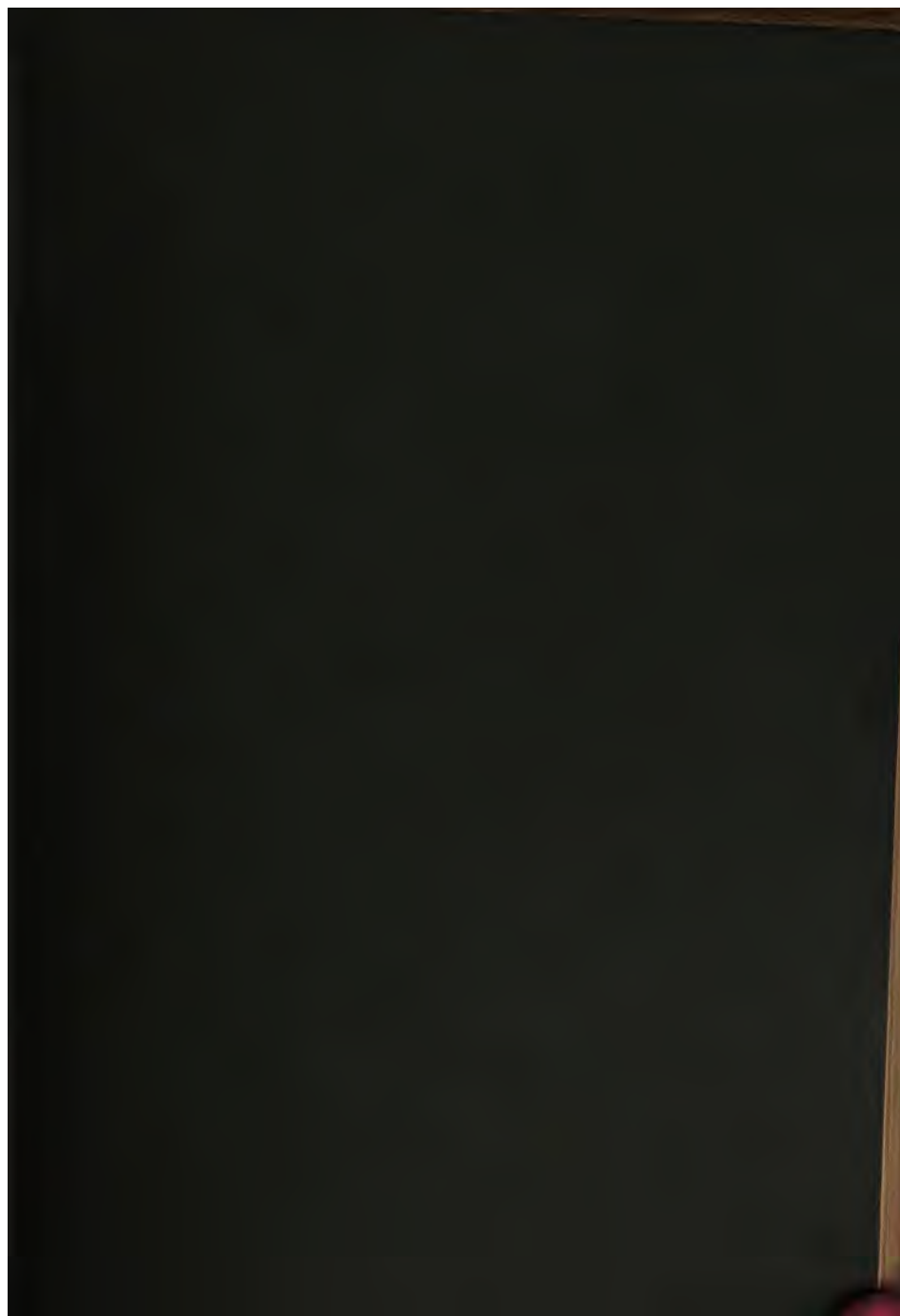
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KENELM CHILLINGLY

KENELM CHILLINGLY

HIS

ADVENTURES AND OPINIONS

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CAXTONS,' &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

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BOOK III.

KENELM CHILLINGLY.



BOOK III.—CHAPTER I.

IF there were a woman in the world who might be formed and fitted to reconcile Kenelm Chillingly to the sweet troubles of love and the pleasant bickerings of wedded life, one might reasonably suppose that that woman could be found in Cecilia Travers. An only daughter, and losing her mother in childhood, she had been raised to the mistress-ship of a household at an age in which most girls are still putting their dolls to bed; and thus had early acquired that sense of responsibility, accompanied with the habits of self-reliance, which seldom fails to give a

certain nobility to character ; though almost as often, in the case of women, it steals away the tender gentleness which constitutes the charm of their sex.

It had not done so in the instance of Cecilia Travers, because she was so woman-like that even the exercise of power could not make her manlike. There was in the depth of her nature such an instinct of sweetness, that wherever her mind toiled and wandered it gathered and hoarded honey.

She had one advantage over most girls in the same rank of life—she had not been taught to fritter away such capacities for culture as Providence gave her in the sterile nothingnesses which are called feminine accomplishments. She did not paint figures out of drawing in meagre water-colours ; she had not devoted years of her life to the inflicting on polite audiences the boredom of Italian bravuras, which they could hear better sung by a third-rate professional singer in a metropolitan music-hall. I am afraid she had no other female accomplishments than those

by which the sempstress or embroideress earns her daily bread. That sort of work she loved, and she did it deftly.

But if she had not been profitlessly plagued by masters, Cecilia Travers had been singularly favoured by her father's choice of a teacher,—no great merit in him either. He had a prejudice against professional governesses, and it chanced that among his own family connections was a certain Mrs Cam-pion, a lady of some literary distinction, whose husband had held a high situation in one of our public offices, and living, much to his satisfaction, up to a very handsome income, had died, much to the astonishment of others, without leaving a farthing behind him.

Fortunately, there were no children to provide for. A small government pension was allotted to the widow ; and as her husband's house had been made by her one of the pleasantest in London, she was popular enough to be invited by numerous friends to their country seats—among others, by Mr

Travers. She came intending to stay a fortnight. At the end of that time she had grown so attached to Cecilia, and Cecilia to her, and her presence had become so pleasant and so useful to her host, that the Squire entreated her to stay and undertake the education of his daughter. Mrs Campion, after some hesitation, gratefully consented ; and thus Cecilia, from the age of eight to her present age of nineteen, had the inestimable advantage of living in constant companionship with a woman of richly-cultivated mind, accustomed to hear the best criticisms on the best books, and adding to no small accomplishment in literature the refinement of manners and that sort of prudent judgment which result from habitual intercourse with an intellectual and gracefully world-wise circle of society ; so that Cecilia herself, without being at all blue or pedantic, became one of those rare young women with whom a well-educated man can converse on equal terms—from whom he gains as much as he can impart to her ; while a man who,

not caring much about books, is still gentleman enough to value good breeding, felt a relief in exchanging the forms of his native language without the shock of hearing that a bishop was "a swell," or a croquet-party "awfully jolly."

In a word, Cecilia was one of those women whom heaven forms for man's helpmate—who, if he were born to rank and wealth, would, as his partner, reflect on them a new dignity, and add to their enjoyment by bringing forth their duties—who, not less if the husband she chose were poor and struggling, would encourage, sustain, and soothe him, take her own share of his burdens, and temper the bitterness of life with the all-recompensing sweetness of her smile.

Little, indeed, as yet had she ever thought of love or of lovers. She had not even formed to herself any of those ideals which float before the eyes of most girls when they enter their teens. But of two things she felt inly convinced—first, that she could never wed where she did not love; and,

secondly, that where she did love it would be for life.

And now I close this sketch with a picture of the girl herself. She has just come into her room from inspecting the preparations for the evening entertainment which her father is to give to his tenants and rural neighbours.

She has thrown aside her straw-hat, and put down the large basket which she has emptied of flowers. She pauses before the glass, smoothing back the ruffled bands of her hair—hair of a dark, soft chestnut, silky and luxuriant—never polluted, and never, so long as she lives, to be polluted by auricomous cosmetics:—far from that delicate darkness, every tint of the colours traditionally dedicated to the locks of Judas.

Her complexion, usually of that soft bloom which inclines to paleness, is now heightened into glow by exercise and sunlight. The features are small and feminine, the eyes dark with long lashes, the mouth singularly beautiful, with a dimple on either

side, and parted now in a half-smile at some pleasant recollection, giving a glimpse of small teeth glistening as pearls. But the peculiar charm of her face is in an expression of serene happiness, that sort of happiness which seems as if it had never been interrupted by a sorrow, had never been troubled by a sin—that holy kind of happiness which belongs to innocence, the light reflected from a heart and conscience alike at peace.

CHAPTER II.

It was a lovely summer evening for the Squire's rural entertainment. Mr Travers had some guests staying with him : they had dined early for the occasion, and were now grouped with their host, a little before six o'clock, on the lawn. The house was of irregular architecture, altered or added to at various periods from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Victoria : at one end, the oldest part, a gable with mullion-windows ; at the other, the newest part, a flat-roofed wing, with modern sashes opening to the ground, the intermediate part much hidden by a verandah covered with creepers in full bloom. The lawn was a spacious table-land facing the west, and backed by a green and gentle hill, crowned with the ruins of an ancient

priory. On one side of the lawn stretched a flower-garden and pleasure-ground, originally planned by Repton; on the opposite angles of the sward were placed two large marquees—one for dancing, the other for supper. Towards the south the view was left open, and commanded the prospect of an old English park, not of the stateliest character,—not intersected with ancient avenues, nor clothed with profitless fern as lairs for deer—but the park of a careful agriculturist, uniting profit with show, the sward duly drained and nourished, fit to fatten bullocks in an incredibly short time, and somewhat spoilt to the eye by subdivisions of wire-fence. Mr Travers was renowned for skilful husbandry, and the general management of land to the best advantage. He had come into the estate while still in childhood, and thus enjoyed the accumulations of a long minority. He had entered the Guards at the age of eighteen, and having more command of money than most of his contemporaries, though they

might be of higher rank and the sons of richer men, he had been much courted and much plundered. At the age of twenty-five he found himself one of the leaders of fashion, renowned chiefly for reckless daring wherever honour could be plucked out of the nettle danger; a steeplechaser, whose exploits made a quiet man's hair stand on end; a rider across country, taking leaps which a more cautious huntsman carefully avoided. Known at Paris as well as in London, he had been admired by ladies whose smiles had cost him duels, the marks of which still remained in glorious scars on his person. No man ever seemed more likely to come to direst grief before attaining the age of thirty, for at twenty-seven all the accumulations of his minority were gone; and his estate, which, when he came of age, was scarcely three thousand a-year, but entirely at his own disposal, was mortgaged up to its eyes.

His friends began to shake their heads and call him "poor fellow;" but with all his wild faults, Leopold Travers had been wholly

pure from the two vices out of which a man does not often redeem himself. He had never drunk and he had never gambled. His nerves were not broken, his brain was not besotted. There was plenty of health in him yet, mind and body. At the critical period of his life he married for love, and his choice was a most felicitous one. The lady had no fortune; but, though handsome and high-born, she had no taste for extravagance, and no desire for other society than that of the man she loved. So when he said, "Let us settle in the country and try our best to live on a few hundreds, lay by, and keep the old place out of the market," she consented with a joyful heart: and marvel it was to all how this wild Leopold Travers did settle down; did take to cultivating his home farm with his men from sunrise to sunset, like a common tenant-farmer; did contrive to pay the interest on the mortgages, and keep his head above water. After some years of pupilage in this school of thrift, during which his habits

became formed, and his whole character braced, Leopold Travers suddenly found himself again rich, through the wife whom he had so prudently married without other dower than her love and her virtues. Her only brother, Lord Eagleton, a Scotch peer, had been engaged in marriage to a young lady considered to be a rare prize in the lottery of wedlock. The marriage was broken off under very disastrous circumstances; but the young Lord, good-looking and agreeable, was naturally expected to seek speedy consolation in some other alliance. Nevertheless he did not do so;—he became a confirmed invalid, and died single, leaving to his sister all in his power to save from the distant kinsman who succeeded to his lands and title,—a goodly sum, which not only sufficed to pay off the mortgages on Neesdale Park, but bestowed on its owner a surplus which the practical knowledge of country life that he had acquired enabled him to devote with extraordinary profit to the general

improvement of his estate. He replaced tumble-down old farm-buildings with new constructions on the most approved principles; bought or pensioned off certain slovenly incompetent tenants; threw sundry petty holdings into large farms suited to the buildings he constructed; purchased here and there small bits of land, commodious to the farms they adjoined, and completing the integrity of his ring-fence; stubbed up profitless woods which diminished the value of neighbouring arables, by obstructing sun and air, and harbouring legions of rabbits; and then seeking tenants of enterprise and capital, more than doubled his original yearly rental, and perhaps more than tripled the market value of his property. Simultaneously with this acquisition of fortune, he emerged from the inhospitable and unsocial obscurity which his previous poverty had compelled, took an active part in county business, proved himself an excellent speaker at public meetings, subscribed liberally to the Hunt, and occasionally joined in it—a

less bold but a wiser rider than of yore. In short, as Themistocles boasted that he could make a small state great, so Leopold Travers might boast with equal truth that, by his energies, his judgment, and the weight of his personal character, he had made the owner of a property which had been at his succession to it of third-rate rank in the county, a personage so considerable that no knight of the shire against whom he declared could have been elected, and if he had determined to stand himself he would have been chosen free of expense.

But he said, on being solicited to become a candidate, "When a man once gives himself up to the care and improvement of a landed estate, he has no time and no heart for anything else. An estate is an income or a kingdom, according as the owner chooses to take it. I take it as a kingdom, and I cannot be *roi fainéant*, with a steward for *maire du palais*. A king does not go into the House of Commons."

Three years after this rise in the social

ladder, Mrs Travers was seized with congestion of the lungs, followed by pleurisy, and died after less than a week's illness. Leopold never wholly recovered her loss. Though still young, and always handsome, the idea of another wife, the love of another woman, were notions which he dismissed from his mind with a quiet scorn. He was too masculine a creature to parade grief. For some weeks, indeed, he shut himself up in his own room, so rigidly secluded that he would not see even his daughter. But one morning he appeared in his fields as usual, and from that day resumed his old habits, and gradually renewed that cordial interchange of hospitalities which had popularly distinguished him since his accession to wealth. Still people felt that the man was changed; he was more taciturn, more grave: if always just in his dealings, he took the harder side of justice, where in his wife's time he had taken the gentler. Perhaps, to a man of strong will, the habitual intercourse with an amiable woman is essen-

tial for those occasions in which Will best proves the fineness of its temper by the facility with which it can be bent.

It may be said that Leopold Travers might have found such intercourse in the intimate companionship of his own daughter. But she was a mere child when his wife died, and she grew up to womanhood too insensibly for him to note the change. Besides, where a man has found a wife his all-in-all, a daughter can never supply her place. The very reverence due to children precludes unrestrained confidence; and there is not that sense of permanent fellowship in a daughter which a man has in a wife,—any day a stranger may appear and carry her off from him. At all events Leopold did not own in Cecilia the softening influence to which he had yielded in her mother. He was fond of her, proud of her, indulgent to her; but the indulgence had its set limits. Whatever she asked solely for herself he granted; whatever she wished for matters under feminine control—the domestic household,

the parish school, the alms-receiving poor—obtained his gentlest consideration. But when she had been solicited by some offending out-of-door dependant, or some petty defaulting tenant to use her good offices in favour of the culprit, Mr Travers checked her interference by a firm ‘No,’ though uttered in a mild accent; and accompanied with a masculine aphorism to the effect “that there would be no such things as strict justice and disciplined order in the world if a man yielded to a woman’s pleadings in any matter of business between man and man.” From this it will be seen that Mr Lethbridge had overrated the value of Cecilia’s alliance in the negotiation respecting Mrs Bawtrey’s premium and shop.

CHAPTER III.

IF, having just perused what has thus been written on the biographical antecedents and mental characteristics of Leopold Travers, you, my dear reader, were to be personally presented to that gentleman as he now stands, the central figure of the group gathered round him, on his terrace, you would probably be surprised,—nay, I have no doubt you would say to yourself, “Not at all the sort of man I expected.” In that slender form, somewhat below the middle height; in that fair countenance which still, at the age of forty-eight, retains a delicacy of feature and of colouring which is of almost woman-like beauty, and, from the quiet placidity of its expression, conveys at first glance the notion of almost woman-like

mildness,—it would be difficult to recognise a man who in youth had been renowned for reckless daring, in maturer years more honourably distinguished for steadfast prudence and determined purpose, and, who, alike in faults or in merits, was as emphatically masculine as a biped in trousers can possibly be.

Mr Travers is listening to a young man of about two-and-twenty, the eldest son of the richest nobleman of the county, and who intends to start for the representation of the shire at the next general election, which is close at hand. The Hon. George Belvoir is tall, inclined to be stout, and will look well on the hustings. He has had those pains taken with his education which an English peer generally does take with the son intended to succeed to the representation of an honourable name and the responsibilities of high station. If eldest sons do not often make as great a figure in the world as their younger brothers, it is not because their minds are less cultivated, but because they

have less motive power for action. George Belvoir was well read, especially in that sort of reading which befits a future senator—history, statistics, political economy, so far as that dismal science is compatible with the agricultural interest. He was also well-principled, had a strong sense of discipline and duty, was prepared in politics firmly to uphold as right whatever was proposed by his own party, and to reject as wrong whatever was proposed by the other. At present he was rather loud and noisy in the assertion of his opinions,—young men fresh from the university generally are. It was the secret wish of Mr Travers that George Belvoir should become his son-in-law—less because of his rank and wealth (though such advantages were not of a nature to be despised by a practical man like Leopold Travers), than on account of those qualities in his personal character which were likely to render him an excellent husband.

Seated on wire benches, just without the verandah, but shaded by its fragrant fes-

toons, were Mrs Campion and three ladies, the wives of neighbouring squires. Cecilia stood a little apart from them, bending over a long-backed Skye terrier, whom she was teaching to stand on his hind-legs.

But see, the company are arriving ! How suddenly that green space, ten minutes ago so solitary, has become animated and populous !

Indeed the Park now presented a very lively appearance : vans, carts, and farmers' chaises were seen in crowded procession along the winding road ; foot-passengers were swarming towards the house in all directions. The herds and flocks in the various enclosures stopped grazing to stare at the unwonted invaders of their pasture ; yet the orderly nature of the host imparted a respect for order to his ruder visitors ; not even a turbulent boy attempted to scale the fences, or creep through their wires ; all threaded the narrow turnstiles which gave egress from one subdivision of the sward to another.

Mr Travers turned to George Belvoir—
“I see old farmer Steen’s yellow gig. Mind how you talk to him, George. He is full of whims and crotchets, and if you once brush his feathers the wrong way he will be as vindictive as a parrot. But he is the man who must second you at the nomination. No other tenant-farmer carries the same weight with his class.”

“I suppose,” said George, “that if Mr Steen is the best man to second me at the hustings, he is a good speaker?”

“A good speaker?—in one sense he is. He never says a word too much. The last time he seconded the nomination of the man you are to succeed, this was his speech: ‘Brother Electors, for twenty years I have been one of the judges at our county cattle-show. I know one animal from another. Looking at the specimens before us to-day, none of them are as good of their kind as I’ve seen elsewhere. But if you choose Sir John Hogg you’ll not get the wrong sow by the ear!’”

“At least,” said George, after a laugh at

this sample of eloquence unadorned, "Mr Steen does not err on the side of flattery in his commendations of a candidate. But what makes him such an authority with the farmers? Is he a first-rate agriculturist?"

"In thrift, yes!—in spirit, no! He says that all expensive experiments should be left to gentlemen farmers. He is an authority with other tenants—1stly, Because he is a very keen censor of their landlords; 2dly, Because he holds himself thoroughly independent of his own; 3dly, Because he is supposed to have studied the political bearings of questions that affect the landed interest, and has more than once been summoned to give his opinion on such subjects to Committees of both Houses of Parliament. Here he comes. Observe, when I leave you to talk to him, 1stly, that you confess utter ignorance of practical farming. Nothing enrages him like the presumption of a gentleman farmer like myself; 2dly, that you ask his opinion on the publication of Agricultural

Statistics, just modestly intimating that you, as at present advised, think that inquisitorial researches into a man's business involve principles opposed to the British Constitution. And on all that he may say as to the shortcomings of landlords in general, and of your father in particular, make no reply, but listen with an air of melancholy conviction. How do you do, Mr Steen, and how's the Mistress? Why have you not brought her with you?"

"My good woman is in the straw again, Squire. Who is that youngster?"

"Hist! let me introduce Mr Belvoir."

Mr Belvoir offers his hand.

"No, sir!" vociferates Steen, putting both his own hands behind him. "No offence, young gentleman. But I don't give my hand at first sight to a man who wants to shake a vote out of it. Not that I know anything against you. But, if you be a farmer's friend, rabbits are not, and my Lord your father is a great one for rabbits."

"Indeed you are mistaken there!" cries

George, with vehement earnestness. Mr Travers gave him a nudge, as much as to say, "Hold your tongue." George understood the hint, and is carried off meekly by Mr Steen down the solitude of the plantations.

The guests now arrived fast and thick. They consisted chiefly not only of Mr Travers's tenants, but of farmers and their families within the range of eight or ten miles from the Park, with a few of the neighbouring gentry and clergy.

It was not a supper intended to include the labouring class. For Mr Travers had an especial dislike to the custom of exhibiting peasants at feeding-time, as if they were so many tamed animals of an inferior species. When he entertained work-people, he made them comfortable in their own way; and peasants feel more comfortable when not invited to be stared out of countenance.

"Well, Lethbridge," said Mr Travers, "where is the young gladiator you promised to bring?"

"I did bring him, and he was by my side not a minute ago. He has suddenly given me the slip—*abiit, evasit, erupit*. I was looking round for him in vain when you accosted me."

"I hope he has not seen some guest of mine whom he wants to fight."

"I hope not," answered the Parson, doubtfully. "He's a strange fellow. But I think you will be pleased with him—that is, if he can be found. Oh, Mr Saunderson, how do you do? Have you seen your visitor?"

"No, sir, I have just come. My Mistress, Squire, and my three girls;—and this is my son."

"A hearty welcome to all," said the graceful Squire; (turning to Saunderson junior) "I suppose you are fond of dancing. Get yourself a partner. We may as well open the ball."

"Thank you, sir, but I never dance," said Saunderson junior, with an air of austere superiority to an amusement which the March of Intellect had left behind.

"Then you'll have less to regret when you are grown old. But the band is striking up; we must adjourn to the marquee. George" (Mr Belvoir, escaped from Mr Steen, had just made his reappearance), "will you give your arm to Cecilia, to whom I think you are engaged for the first quadrille?"

"I hope," said George to Cecilia, as they walked towards the marquee, "that Mr Steen is not an average specimen of the electors I shall have to canvass. Whether he has been brought up to honour his own father and mother I can't pretend to say, but he seems bent upon teaching me not to honour mine. Having taken away my father's moral character upon the unfounded allegation that he loved rabbits better than mankind, he then assailed my innocent mother on the score of religion, and inquired when she was going over to the Church of Rome—basing that inquiry on the assertion that she had taken away her custom from a Protestant grocer and conferred it on a Papist."

“Those are favourable signs, Mr Belvoir. Mr Steen always prefaces a kindness by a great deal of incivility. I asked him once to lend me a pony, my own being suddenly taken lame, and he seized that opportunity to tell me that my father was an impostor in pretending to be a judge of cattle; that he was a tyrant, screwing his tenants in order to indulge extravagant habits of hospitality; and implied that it would be a great mercy if we did not live to apply to him, not for a pony, but for parochial relief. I went away indignant. But he sent me the pony. I am sure he will give you his vote.”

“Meanwhile,” said George, with a timid attempt at gallantry, as they now commenced the quadrille, “I take encouragement from the belief that I have the good wishes of Miss Travers. If ladies had votes, as Mr Mill recommends, why, then——”

“Why, then, I should vote as papa does,” said Miss Travers, simply. “And if women had votes, I suspect there would be very

little peace in any household where they did not vote as the man at the head of it wished them."

"But I believe, after all," said the aspirant to Parliament, seriously, "that the advocates for female suffrage would limit it to women independent of masculine control—widows and spinsters voting in right of their own independent tenements."

"In that case," said Cecilia, "I suppose they would still generally go by the opinion of some man they relied on, or make a very silly choice if they did not."

"You underrate the good sense of your sex."

"I hope not. Do you underrate the good sense of yours, if, in far more than half the things appertaining to daily life, the wisest men say, 'better leave *them to the women*'? But you're forgetting the figure—*cavalier seul*."

"By the way," said George, in another interval of the dance, "do you know a Mr

Chillingly, the son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, in Westshire ?”

“No ; why do you ask ?”

“Because I thought I caught a glimpse of his face : it was just as Mr Steen was bearing me away down the plantation. From what you say, I must suppose I was mistaken.”

“Chillingly ! But surely some persons were talking yesterday at dinner about a young gentleman of that name as being likely to stand for Westshire at the next election, but who had made a very unpopular and eccentric speech on the occasion of his coming of age.”

“The same man—I was at college with him—a very singular character. He was thought clever—won a prize or two—took a good degree, but it was generally said that he would have deserved a much higher one if some of his papers had not contained covert jests either on the subject or the examiners. It is a dangerous thing to set up as a humorist in practical life—especially pub-

lic life. They say Mr Pitt had naturally a great deal of wit and humour, but he wisely suppressed any evidence of those qualities in his Parliamentary speeches. Just like Chillingly, to turn into ridicule the important event of festivities in honour of his coming of age—an occasion that can never occur again in the whole course of his life.”

“It was bad taste,” said Cecilia, “if intentional. But perhaps he was misunderstood, or taken by surprise.”

“Misunderstood—possibly ; but taken by surprise—no. The coolest fellow I ever met. Not that I have met him very often. Laterly, indeed, at Cambridge he lived much alone. It was said that he read hard. I doubt that, for my rooms were just over his, and I know that he was much more frequently out of doors than in. He rambled a good deal about the country on foot. I have seen him in by-lanes a dozen miles distant from the town when I have been riding back from the Hunt. He was fond of the water, and pulled a mighty strong oar,

but declined to belong to our University crew ; yet if ever there was a fight between undergraduates and bargemen, he was sure to be in the midst of it. Yes, a very great oddity indeed, full of contradictions, for a milder, quieter fellow in general intercourse you could not see ; and as for the jests of which he was accused in his Examination Papers, his very face should have acquitted him of the charge before any impartial jury of his countrymen."

"You sketch quite an interesting picture of him," said Cecilia. "I wish we did know him ; he would be worth seeing."

"And, once seen, you would not easily forget him—a dark, handsome face, with large melancholy eyes, and with one of those spare, slender figures which enable a man to disguise his strength, as a fraudulent billiard-player disguises his play."

The dance had ceased during this conversation, and the speakers were now walking slowly to and fro the lawn amid the general crowd.

“How well your father plays the part of host to these rural folks!” said George, with a secret envy. “Do observe how quietly he puts that shy young farmer at his ease, and now how kindly he deposits that lame old lady on the bench, and places the stool under her feet. What a canvasser he would be! and how young he still looks, and how monstrous handsome!”

This last compliment was uttered as Travers, having made the old lady comfortable, had joined the three Miss Saundersons, dividing his pleasant smile equally between them, and seemingly unconscious of the admiring glances which many another rural beauty directed towards him as he passed along. About the man there was a certain indescribable elegance, a natural suavity free from all that affectation, whether of forced heartiness or condescending civility, which too often characterises the well-meant efforts of provincial magnates to accommodate themselves to persons of inferior station and breeding. It is a great advantage to a

man to have passed his early youth in that most equal and most polished of all democracies—the best society of large capitals. And to such acquired advantage Leopold Travers added the inborn qualities that please.

Later in the evening Travers, again accosting Mr Lethbridge, said, “I have been talking much to the Saundersons about that young man who did us the inestimable service of punishing your ferocious parishioner, Tom Bowles ; and all I hear so confirms the interest your own account inspired me with, that I should really like much to make his acquaintance. Has not he turned up yet?”

“No ; I fear he must have gone. But in that case I hope you will take his generous desire to serve my poor basket-maker into benevolent consideration.”

“Do not press me ; I feel so reluctant to refuse any request of yours. But I have my own theory as to the management of an estate, and my system does not allow of

favour. I should wish to explain that to the young stranger himself. For I hold courage in such honour that I do not like a brave man to leave these parts with an impression that Leopold Travers is an ungracious churl. However, he may not have gone. I will go and look for him myself. Just tell Cecilia that she has danced enough with the gentry, and that I have told farmer Turby's son, a fine young fellow, and a capital rider across country, that I expect him to show my daughter that he can dance as well as he rides."

CHAPTER IV.

QUITTING Mr Lethbridge, Travers turned with quick step towards the more solitary part of the grounds. He did not find the object of his search in the walks of the plantation ; and, on taking the circuit of his demesne, wound his way back towards the lawn through a sequestered rocky hollow in the rear of the marquee, which had been devoted to a fernery. Here he came to a sudden pause ; for, seated a few yards before him on a grey crag, and the moonlight full on his face, he saw a solitary man, looking upwards with a still and mournful gaze, evidently absorbed in abstract contemplation.

Recalling the description of the stranger which he had heard from Mr Lethbridge and the Saundersons, Mr Travers felt sure

that he had come on him at last. He approached gently ; and, being much concealed by the tall ferns, Kenelm (for that itinerant it was) did not see him advance, until he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning round, beheld a winning smile and heard a pleasant voice.

"I think I am not mistaken," said Leopold Travers, "in assuming you to be the gentleman whom Mr Lethbridge promised to introduce to me, and who is staying with my tenant, Mr Saunderson?"

Kenelm rose and bowed. Travers saw at once that it was the bow of a man in his own world, and not in keeping with the Sunday costume of a petty farmer. "Nay," said he, "let us talk seated;" and, placing himself on the crag, he made room for Kenelm beside him.

"In the first place," resumed Travers, "I must thank you for having done a public service in putting down the brute force which has long tyrannised over the neighbourhood. Often in my young days I have

felt the disadvantage of height and sinews, whenever it would have been a great convenience to terminate dispute or chastise insolence by a resort to man's primitive weapons; but I never more lamented my physical inferiority than on certain occasions when I would have given my ears to be able to thrash Tom Bowles myself. It has been as great a disgrace to my estate that that bully should so long have infested it, as it is to the King of Italy not to be able with all his armies to put down a brigand in Calabria."

"Pardon me, Mr Travers, but I am one of those rare persons who do not like to hear ill of their friends. Mr Thomas Bowles is a particular friend of mine."

"Eh!" cried Travers, aghast. "'Friend!' You are joking."

"You would not accuse me of joking if you knew me better. But surely you have felt that there are few friends one likes more cordially, and ought to respect more heedfully, than the enemy with whom one has just made it up."

"You say well, and I accept the rebuke," said Travers, more and more surprised. "And I certainly have less right to abuse Mr Bowles than you have, since I had not the courage to fight him. To turn to another subject less provocative. Mr Lethbridge has told me of your amiable desire to serve two of his young parishioners—Will Somers and Jessie Wiles—and of your generous offer to pay the money Mrs Bawtrey demands for the transfer of her lease. To that negotiation my consent is necessary, and that consent I cannot give. Shall I tell you why?"

"Pray do. Your reasons may admit of argument."

"Every reason admits of argument," said Mr Travers, amused at the calm assurance of a youthful stranger in anticipating argument with a skilful proprietor on the management of his own property. "I do not, however, tell you my reasons for the sake of argument, but in vindication of my seeming want of courtesy towards yourself. I have had a very hard

and a very difficult task to perform in bringing the rental of my estate up to its proper value. In doing so, I have been compelled to adopt one uniform system, equally applied to my largest and my pettiest holdings. That system consists in securing the best and safest tenants I can, at the rents computed by a valuer in whom I have confidence. To this system, universally adopted on my estate, though it incurred much unpopularity at first, I have at length succeeded in reconciling the public opinion of my neighbourhood. People began by saying I was hard; they now acknowledge I am just. If I once give way to favour or sentiment, I unhinge my whole system. Every day I am subjected to moving solicitations. Lord Twostars—a keen politician—begs me to give a vacant farm to a tenant because he is an excellent canvasser, and has always voted straight with the Party. Mrs Fourstars, a most benevolent woman, entreats me not to dismiss another tenant, because he is in distressed circumstances, and has a large

family—very good reasons perhaps for my excusing him an arrear, or allowing him a retiring pension, but the worst reasons in the world for letting him continue to ruin himself and my land. Now, Mrs Bawtreys has a small holding on lease at the inadequate rent of £8 a-year. She asks £45 for its transfer, but she can't transfer the lease without my consent; and I can get £12 a-year as a moderate rental from a large choice of competent tenants. It will better answer to me to pay her the £45 myself, which I have no doubt the incoming tenant would pay me back, at least in part; and if he did not, the additional rent would be good interest for my expenditure. Now, you happen to take a sentimental interest, as you pass through the village, in the loves of a needy cripple, whose utmost industry has but served to save himself from parish relief, and a giddy girl without a sixpence, and you ask me to accept these very equivocal tenants instead of substantial ones, and at a rent one-third less than

the market value. Suppose that I yielded to your request, what becomes of my reputation for practical, business-like justice? I shall have made an inroad into the system by which my whole estate is managed, and have invited all manner of solicitations on the part of friends and neighbours, which I could no longer consistently refuse, having shown how easily I can be persuaded into compliance by a stranger whom I may never see again. And are you sure, after all, that, if you did prevail on me, you would do the individual good you aim at? It is, no doubt, very pleasant to think one has made a young couple happy. But if that young couple fail in keeping the little shop to which you would transplant them (and nothing more likely—peasants seldom become good shopkeepers), and find themselves, with a family of children, dependent solely, not on the arm of a strong labourer, but the ten fingers of a sickly cripple, who makes clever baskets, for which there is but slight and precarious

demand in the neighbourhood, may you not have insured the misery of the couple you wished to render happy?"

"I withdraw all argument," said Kenelm, with an aspect so humiliated and dejected, that it would have softened a Greenland bear, or a Counsel for the Prosecution. "I am more and more convinced that of all the shams in the world, that of benevolence is the greatest. It seems so easy to do good, and it is so difficult to do it. Everywhere, in this hateful civilised life, one runs one's head against a system. A system, Mr Travers, is man's servile imitation of the blind tyranny of what in our ignorance we call 'Natural Laws,' a mechanical something through which the world is ruled by the cruelty of General Principles, to the utter disregard of individual welfare. By Natural Laws creatures prey on each other, and big fishes eat little ones upon system. It is, nevertheless, a hard thing for the little fish. Every nation, every town, every hamlet, every occupation, has a system, by which,

somehow or other, the pond swarms with fishes, of which a great many inferiors contribute to increase the size of a superior. It is an idle benevolence to keep one solitary gudgeon out of the jaws of a pike. Here am I doing what I thought the simplest thing in the world, asking a gentleman, evidently as good-natured as myself, to allow an old woman to let her premises to a deserving young couple, and paying what she asks for it out of my own money. And I find that I am running against a system, and invading all the laws by which a rental is increased and an estate improved. Mr Travers, you have no cause for regret in not having beaten Tom Bowles. You have beaten his victor, and I now give up all dream of further interference with the Natural Laws that govern the village which I have visited in vain. I had meant to remove Tom Bowles from that quiet community. I shall now leave him to return to his former habits—to marry Jessie Wiles — which he certainly will do, and——”

"Hold!" cried Mr Travers. "Do you mean to say that you can induce Tom Bowles to leave the village?"

"I *had* induced him to do it, provided Jessie Wiles married the basket-maker; but as that is out of the question, I am bound to tell him so, and he will stay."

"But if he left, what would become of his business? His mother could not keep it on; his little place is a freehold; the only house in the village that does not belong to me, or I should have ejected him long ago. Would he sell the premises to me?"

"Not if he stays and marries Jessie Wiles. But if he goes with me to Luscombe and settles in that town as a partner to his uncle, I suppose he would be too glad to sell a house of which he can have no pleasant recollections. But what then? You cannot violate your system for the sake of a miserable forge."

"It would not violate my system if, instead of yielding to a sentiment, I gained an advantage; and, to say truth, I should be

very glad to buy that forge and the fields that go with it."

"'Tis your affair now, not mine, Mr Travers. I no longer presume to interfere. I leave the neighbourhood to-morrow : see if *you* can negotiate with Mr Bowles. I have the honour to wish you a good evening."

"Nay, young gentleman, I cannot allow you to quit me thus. You have declined apparently to join the dancers, but you will at least join the supper. Come!"

"Thank you sincerely, no. I came here merely on the business which your system has settled."

"But I am not sure that it is settled." Here Mr Travers wound his arm within Kenelm's, and looking him full in the face, said, "I know that I am speaking to a gentleman at least equal in rank to myself, but as I enjoy the melancholy privilege of being the older man, do not think I take an unwarrantable liberty in asking if you object to tell me your name. I should like to introduce you to my daughter, who is very

partial to Jessie Wiles and to Will Somers. But I can't venture to inflame her imagination by designating you as a prince in disguise."

"Mr Travers, you express yourself with exquisite delicacy. But I am just starting in life, and I shrink from mortifying my father by associating my name with a signal failure. Suppose I were an anonymous contributor, say, to 'The Londoner,' and I had just brought that highly intellectual journal into discredit by a feeble attempt at a good-natured criticism or a generous sentiment, would that be the fitting occasion to throw off the mask, and parade myself to a mocking world as the imbecile violator of an established system? Should I not, in a moment so untoward, more than ever desire to merge my insignificant unit in the mysterious importance which the smallest Singular obtains when he makes himself a Plural, and speaks not as 'I,' but as 'We'? *We* are insensible to the charm of young ladies; *We* are not bribed by suppers; *We*, like the witches of

Macbeth, have no name on earth; *We* are the greatest wisdom of the greatest number; *We* are so upon system; *We* salute you, Mr Travers, and depart unassailable."

Here Kenelm rose, doffed and replaced his hat in majestic salutation, turned towards the entrance of the fernery and found himself suddenly face to face with George Belvoir, behind whom followed, with a throng of guests, the fair form of Cecilia. George Belvoir caught Kenelm by the hand, and exclaimed, "Chillingly! I thought I could not be mistaken."

"Chillingly!" echoed Leopold Travers from behind. "Are you the son of my old friend, Sir Peter?"

Thus discovered and environed, Kenelm did not lose his wonted presence of mind; he turned round to Leopold Travers, who was now close in his rear, and whispered, "If my father was your friend, do not disgrace his son. Do not say I am a failure. Deviate from your system, and let Will Somers succeed Mrs Bawtrey." Then revert-

ing his face to Mr Belvoir, he said tranquilly, "Yes; we have met before."

"Cecilia," said Travers, now interposing, "I am happy to introduce to you as Mr Chillingly, not only the son of an old friend of mine, not only the knight-errant of whose gallant conduct on behalf of your *protégée* Jessie Wiles we have heard so much, but the eloquent arguer who has conquered my better judgment in a matter on which I thought myself infallible. Tell Mr Lethbridge that I accept Will Somers as a tenant for Mrs Bawtrey's premises."

Kenelm grasped the Squire's hand cordially. "May it be in my power to do a kind thing to you, in spite of any system to the contrary!"

"Mr Chillingly, give your arm to my daughter. You will not now object to join the dancers?"

CHAPTER V.

CECILIA stole a shy glance at Kenelm as the two emerged from the fernery into the open space of the lawn. His countenance pleased her. She thought she discovered much latent gentleness under the cold and mournful gravity of its expression; and attributing the silence he maintained to some painful sense of an awkward position in the abrupt betrayal of his incognito, sought with womanly tact to dispel his supposed embarrassment.

"You have chosen a delightful mode of seeing the country this lovely summer weather, Mr Chillingly. I believe such pedestrian exercises are very common with University Students during the Long Vacation."

"Very common, though they generally wander in packs like wild dogs or Australian dingoes. It is only a tame dog that one finds on the road travelling by himself; and then, unless he behaves very quietly, it is ten to one that he is stoned as a mad dog."

"But I am afraid, from what I hear, that you have not been travelling very quietly."

"You are quite right, Miss Travers, and I am a sad dog if not a mad one. But pardon me, we are nearing the marquee; the band is striking up, and, alas! I am not a dancing dog."

He released Cecilia's arm, and bowed.

"Let us sit here a while, then," said she, motioning to a garden-bench. "I have no engagement for the next dance, and as I am a little tired, I shall be glad of a reprieve."

Kenelm sighed, and with the air of a martyr stretching himself on the rack, took his place beside the fairest girl in the county.

"You were at college with Mr Belvoir?"

"I was."

"He was thought clever there?"

"I have not a doubt of it."

"You know he is canvassing our county for the next election. My father takes a warm interest in his success, and thinks he will be a useful member of Parliament."

"Of that I am certain. For the first five years he will be called pushing, noisy, and conceited, much sneered at by men of his own age, and coughed down on great occasions; for the five following years he will be considered a sensible man in committees, and a necessary feature in debate; at the end of those years he will be an under-secretary; in five years more he will be a Cabinet Minister, and the representative of an important section of opinions: he will be an irreproachable private character, and his wife will be seen wearing the family diamonds at all the great parties. She will take an interest in politics and theology; and if she die before him, her husband will show his sense of wedded happiness by choosing

another lady, equally fitted to wear the family diamonds and to maintain the family consequence."

In spite of her laughter, Cecilia felt a certain awe at the solemnity of voice and manner with which Kenelm delivered these oracular sentences, and the whole prediction seemed strangely in unison with her own impressions of the character whose fate was thus shadowed out.

"Are you a fortune-teller, Mr Chillingly?" she asked, falteringly, and after a pause.

"As good a one as any whose hand you could cross with a shilling."

"Will you tell me my fortune?"

"No; I never tell the fortunes of ladies, because your sex is credulous, and a lady might believe what I tell her. And when we believe such and such is to be our fate, we are too apt to work out our life into the verification of the belief. If Lady Macbeth had disbelieved in the witches, she would never have persuaded her lord to murder Duncan."

"But can you not predict me a more cheerful fortune than that tragical illustration of yours seems to threaten?"

"The future is never cheerful to those who look on the dark side of the question. Mr Gray is too good a poet for people to read nowadays, otherwise I should refer you to his lines in the Ode to Eton College—

' See how all around us wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train.'

Meanwhile it is something to enjoy the present. We are young—we are listening to music—there is no cloud over the summer stars—our conscience is clear—our hearts untroubled; why look forward in search of happiness?—shall we ever be happier than we are at this moment?"

Here Mr Travers came up. "We are going to supper in a few minutes," said he; "and before we lose sight of each other, Mr Chillingly, I wish to impress on you the moral fact that one good turn

deserves another. I have yielded to your wish, and now you must yield to mine. Come and stay a few days with me, and see your benevolent intentions carried out."

Kenelm paused. Now that he was discovered, why should he not pass a few days among his equals? Realities or shams might be studied with squires no less than with farmers; besides, he had taken a liking to Travers. That graceful *ci-devant* Wildair, with the slight form and the delicate face, was unlike rural squires in general. Kenelm paused, and then said, frankly—

"I accept your invitation. Would the middle of next week suit you?"

"The sooner the better. Why not to-morrow?"

"To-morrow I am pre-engaged to an excursion with Mr Bowles. That may occupy two or three days, and meanwhile I must write home for other garments than those in which I am a sham."

"Come any day you like."

"Agreed."

“Agreed ; and, hark ! the supper-bell.”

“Supper,” said Kenelm, offering his arm to Miss Travers,—“supper is a word truly interesting, truly poetical. It associates itself with the entertainments of the ancients—with the Augustan age—with Horace and Mæcenas ;—with the only elegant but too fleeting period of the modern world—with the nobles and wits of Paris, when Paris had wits and nobles ;—with Molière and the warm-hearted Duke who is said to have been the original of Molière’s *Misanthrope* ;—with Madame de Sévigné and the Racine whom that inimitable letter-writer denied to be a poet ;—with Swift and Bolingbroke—with Johnson, Goldsmith, and Garrick. Epochs are signalised by their eatings. I honour him who revives the Golden Age of suppers.” So saying, his face brightened.

CHAPTER VI.

KENELM CHILLINGLY, ESQ., TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., ETC. ETC.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I am alive and unmarried. Providence has watched over me in these respects; but I have had narrow escapes. Hitherto I have not acquired much worldly wisdom in my travels. It is true that I have been paid two shillings as a day-labourer, and, in fact, have fairly earned at least six shillings more; but against that additional claim I generously set off, as an equivalent, my board and lodging. On the other hand, I have spent forty-five pounds out of the fifty which I devoted to the purchase of experience. But I hope you will be a gainer by that investment. Send an order to Mr William Somers, basket-

maker, Graveleigh, ——shire, for the hampers and game-baskets you require, and I undertake to say that you will save twenty per cent on that article (all expenses of carriage deducted), and do a good action into the bargain. You know, from long habit, what a good action is worth better than I do. I daresay you will be more pleased to learn, than I am to record, the fact, that I have been again decoyed into the society of ladies and gentlemen, and have accepted an invitation to pass a few days at Neesdale Park with Mr Travers—christened Leopold—who calls you ‘his old friend’—a term which I take for granted belongs to that class of poetic exaggeration in which the ‘dears’ and ‘darlings’ of conjugal intercourse may be categorised. Having for that visit no suitable garments in my knapsack, kindly tell Jenkes to forward me a portmanteauful of those which I habitually wore as Kenelm Chillingly, directed to me at ‘Neesdale Park, near Beaverston.’ Let me find it there on Wednesday.

“I leave this place to-morrow morning in company with a friend of the name of Bowles—no relation to the reverend gentleman of that name who held the doctrine that a poet should bore us to death with fiddle-faddle minutiae of natural objects in preference to that study of the insignificant creature Man, in his relations to his species, to which Mr Pope limited the range of his inferior muse ; and who, practising as he preached, wrote some very nice verses, to which the Lake school and its successors are largely indebted. My Mr Bowles has exercised his faculty upon Man, and has a powerful inborn gift in that line which only requires cultivation to render him a match for any one. His more masculine nature is at present much obscured by that passing cloud which, in conventional language, is called ‘a Hopeless Attachment.’ But I trust, in the course of our excursion, which is to be taken on foot, that this vapour may consolidate by motion, as some old-fashioned astronomers held that the nebula does con-

solidate into a matter-of-fact world. Is it Rochefoucauld who says that a man is never more likely to form a hopeful attachment for one than when his heart is softened by a hopeless attachment to another? May it be long, my dear father, before you condole with me on the first or congratulate me on the second.—Your affectionate son,

“KENELM.

“Direct to me at Mr Travers’s. Kindest love to my mother.”

The answer to this letter is here subjoined as the most convenient place for its insertion, though of course it was not received till some days after the date of my next chapter.

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., TO KENELM
CHILLINGLY, ESQ.

“MY DEAR BOY,—With this I despatch the portmanteau you require to the address that you give. I remember well Leopold

Travers when he was in the Guards—a very handsome and a very wild young fellow. But he had much more sense than people gave him credit for, and frequented intellectual society; at least I met him very often at my friend Campion's, whose house was then the favourite rendezvous of distinguished persons. He had very winning manners, and one could not help taking an interest in him. I was very glad when I heard he had married and reformed. Here I beg to observe that a man who contracts a taste for low company may indeed often marry, but he seldom reforms when he does so. And, on the whole, I should be much pleased to hear that the experience which has cost you forty-five pounds had convinced you that you might be better employed than earning two, or even six shillings, as a day-labourer.

“I have not given your love to your mother, as you requested. In fact, you have placed me in a very false position towards that other author of your eccentric

being. I could only guard you from the inquisition of the police and the notoriety of descriptive hand-bills by allowing my lady to suppose that you had gone abroad with the Duke of Clairville and his family. It is easy to tell a fib, but it is very difficult to untell it. However, as soon as you have made up your mind to resume your normal position among ladies and gentlemen, I should be greatly obliged if you would apprise me. I don't wish to keep a fib on my conscience a day longer than may be necessary to prevent the necessity of telling another.

“From what you say of Mr Bowles's study of Man, and his inborn talent for that scientific investigation, I suppose that he is a professed Metaphysician, and I should be glad of his candid opinion upon the Primary Basis of Morals, a subject upon which I have for three years meditated the consideration of a critical paper. But having lately read a controversy thereon between two eminent philosophers, in which each accuses the

other of not understanding him, I have resolved for the present to leave the Basis in its unsettled condition.

“You rather alarm me when you say you have had a narrow escape from marriage. Should you, in order to increase the experience you set out to acquire, decide on trying the effect of a Mrs Chillingly upon your nervous system, it would be well to let me know a little beforehand, so that I might prepare your mother’s mind for that event. Such household trifles are within her special province; and she would be much put out if a Mrs Chillingly dropped on her un-awares.

“This subject, however, is too serious to admit of a jest even between two persons who understand, so well as you and I do, the secret cipher by which each other’s outward style of jest is to be gravely interpreted into the irony which says one thing and means another. My dear boy, you are very young—you are wandering about in a very strange manner—and may, no doubt, meet with

many a pretty face by the way, with which you may fancy that you fall in love. You cannot think me a barbarous tyrant if I ask you to promise me, on your honour, that you will not propose to any young lady before you come first to me and submit the case to my examination and approval. You know me too well to suppose that I should unreasonably withhold my consent if convinced that your happiness was at stake. But while what a young man may fancy to be love is often a trivial incident in his life, marriage is the greatest event in it; if on one side it may involve his happiness, on the other side it may insure his misery. Dearest, best, and oddest of sons, give me the promise I ask, and you will free my breast from a terribly anxious thought which now sits on it like a nightmare.

“Your recommendation of a basket-maker comes opportunely. All such matters go through the bailiff’s hands, and it was but the other day that Green was complaining of the high prices of the man he employed

for hampers and game - baskets. Green shall write to your *protégé*.

“Keep me informed of your proceedings as much as your anomalous character will permit; so that nothing may diminish my confidence that the man who had the honour to be christened Kenelm will not disgrace his name, but acquire the distinction denied to a Peter.—Your affectionate father.”

CHAPTER VII.

VILLAGERS lie abed on Sundays later than on work-days, and no shutter was unclosed in a window of the rural street through which Kenelm Chillingly and Tom Bowles went, side by side, in the still soft air of the Sabbath morn. Side by side they went on, crossing the pastoral glebe-lands, where the kine still drowsily reclined under the bowery shade of glinting chestnut-leaves ; and diving thence into a narrow lane or by-road, winding deep between lofty banks all tangled with convolvulus and wild-rose and honey-suckle.

They walked in silence, for Kenelm, after one or two vain attempts at conversation, had the tact to discover that his companion was in no mood for talk ; and being himself

one of those creatures whose minds glide easily into the dreamy monologue of reverie, he was not displeased to muse on undisturbed, drinking quietly into his heart the subdued joy of the summer morn, with the freshness of its sparkling dews, the wayward carol of its earliest birds, the serene quietude of its limpid breezy air. Only when they came to fresh turnings in the road that led towards the town to which they were bound, Tom Bowles stepped before his companion, indicating the way by a monosyllable or a gesture. Thus they journeyed for hours, till the sun attained power, and a little wayside inn near a hamlet invited Kenelm to the thought of rest and food.

"Tom," said he then, rousing from his reverie, "what do you say to breakfast?"

Answered Tom sullenly, "I am not hungry—but as you like."

"Thank you, then we will stop here a while. I find it difficult to believe that you are not hungry, for you are very strong, and there are two things which generally

accompany great physical strength : the one is a keen appetite ; the other is—though you may not suppose it, and it is not commonly known—a melancholic temperament.”

“ Eh !—a what ? ”

“ A tendency to melancholy. Of course you have heard of Hercules—you know the saying ‘as strong as Hercules’ ? ”

“ Yes—of course.”

“ Well, I was first led to the connection between strength, appetite, and melancholy, by reading in an old author, named Plutarch, that Hercules was among the most notable instances of melancholy temperament which the author was enabled to quote. That must have been the traditional notion of the Herculean constitution ; and as for appetite, the appetite of Hercules was a standard joke of the comic writers. When I read that observation it set me thinking, being myself melancholic, and having an exceedingly good appetite. Sure enough, when I began to collect evidence, I found that the strongest men with whom I made

acquaintance, including prize-fighters and Irish draymen, were disposed to look upon life more on the shady than the sunny side of the way ; in short, they were melancholic. But the kindness of Providence allowed them to enjoy their meals, as you and I are about to do."

In the utterance of this extraordinary crotchet Kenelm had halted his steps ; but now striding briskly forward he entered the little inn, and after a glance at its larder, ordered the whole contents to be brought out and placed within a honeysuckle arbour which he spied in the angle of a bowling-green at the rear of the house.

In addition to the ordinary condiments of loaf, and butter, and eggs, and milk, and tea, the board soon groaned beneath the weight of pigeon-pie, cold ribs of beef and shoulder of mutton, remains of a feast which the members of a monthly rustic club had held there the day before. Tom ate little at first ; but example is contagious, and gradually he vied with his companion in the dimi-

nution of the solid viands before him. Then he called for brandy.

"No," said Kenelm. "No, Tom ; you have promised me friendship, and that is not compatible with brandy. Brandy is the worst enemy a man like you can have ; and would make you quarrel even with me. If you want a stimulus I allow you a pipe : I don't smoke myself, as a rule, but there have been times in my life when I required soothing, and then I have felt that a whiff of tobacco stills and softens one like the kiss of a little child. Bring this gentleman a pipe."

Tom grunted, but took to the pipe kindly, and in a few minutes, during which Kenelm left him in silence, a lowering furrow between his brows smoothed itself away.

Gradually he felt the sweetening influences of the day and the place, of the merry sunbeams at play amid the leaves of the arbour, of the frank perfume of the honeysuckle, of the warble of the birds before

they sank into the taciturn repose of a summer noon.

It was with a reluctant sigh that he rose at last, when Kenelm said, "We have yet far to go, we must push on."

The landlady, indeed, had already given them a hint that she and the family wanted to go to church, and to shut up the house in their absence. Kenelm drew out his purse, but Tom did the same with a return of cloud on his brow, and Kenelm saw that he would be mortally offended if suffered to be treated as an inferior; so each paid his due share, and the two men resumed their wandering. This time it was along a by-path amid fields, which was a shorter cut than the lane they had previously followed, to the main road to Luscombe. They walked slowly till they came to a rustic foot-bridge which spanned a gloomy trout-stream, not noisy, but with a low, sweet murmur, doubtless the same stream beside which, many miles away, Kenelm had

conversed with the minstrel. Just as they came to this bridge there floated to their ears the distant sound of the hamlet church bell.

"Now let us sit here a while and listen," said Kenelm, seating himself on the baluster of the bridge. "I see that you brought away your pipe from the inn, and provided yourself with tobacco: refill the pipe and listen."

Tom half smiled and obeyed.

"O friend," said Kenelm, earnestly, and after a long pause of thought, "do you not feel what a blessed thing it is in this mortal life to be ever and anon reminded that you have a soul?"

Tom, startled, withdrew the pipe from his lips, and muttered—

"Eh!"

Kenelm continued—

"You and I, Tom, are not so good as we ought to be—of that there is no doubt; and good people would say justly that we should now be within yon church itself rather than listening to its bell. Granted, my friend,

granted ; but still it is something to hear that bell, and to feel by the train of thought which began in our innocent childhood, when we said our prayers at the knees of a mother, that we were lifted beyond this visible Nature, beyond these fields, and woods, and waters, in which, fair though they be, you and I miss something, in which neither you nor I are as happy as the kine in the fields, as the birds on the bough, as the fishes in the water—lifted to a consciousness of a sense vouchsafed to you and to me, not vouchsafed to the kine, to the bird, and the fish—a sense to comprehend that Nature has a God, and Man has a life hereafter. The bell says that to you and to me. Were that bell a thousand times more musical it could not say that to beast, bird, and fish. Do you understand me, Tom ? ”

Tom remains silent for a minute, and then replies—

“ I never thought of it before ; but as you put it, I understand.”

“ Nature never gives to a living thing

capacities not practically meant for its benefit and use. If Nature gives to us capacities to believe that we have a Creator whom we never saw, of whom we have no direct proof, who is kind and good and tender beyond all that we know of kind and good and tender on earth, it is because the endowment of capacities to conceive such a Being must be for our benefit and use ; it would not be for our benefit and use if it were a lie. Again, if Nature has given to us a capacity to receive the notion that we live again, no matter whether some of us refuse so to believe, and argue against it,—why, the very capacity to receive the idea (for unless we received it we could not argue against it) proves that it is for our benefit and use ; and if there were no such life hereafter, we should be governed and influenced, arrange our modes of life, and mature our civilisation, by obedience to a lie, which Nature falsified herself in giving us the capacity to believe. You still understand me ?”

“ Yes ; it bothers me a little, for you see

I am not a parson's man ; but I do understand."

"Then, my friend, study to apply—for it requires constant study—study to apply that which you understand to your own case. You are something more than Tom Bowles, the smith and doctor of horses ; something more than the magnificent animal who rages for his mate, and fights every rival : the bull does that. You are a soul endowed with the capacity to receive the idea of a Creator so divinely wise and great and good that, though acting by the agency of general laws, He can accommodate them to all individual cases, so that—taking into account the life hereafter, which He grants to you the capacity to believe—all that troubles you now will be proved to you wise and great and good either in this life or the other. Lay that truth to your heart, friend, now—before the bell stops ringing ; recall it every time you hear the church bell ring again. And oh, Tom, you have such a noble nature !——"

“I—I! don’t jeer me—don’t.”

“Such a noble nature; for you can love so passionately, you can war so fiercely, and yet, when convinced that your love would be misery to her you love, can resign it; and yet, when beaten in your war, can so forgive your victor that you are walking in this solitude with him as a friend, knowing that you have but to drop a foot behind him in order to take his life in an unguarded moment; and rather than take his life, you would defend it against an army. Do you think I am so dull as not to see all that? and is not all that a noble nature?”

Tom Bowles covered his face with his hands, and his broad breast heaved.

“Well, then, to that noble nature I now trust. I myself have done little good in life. I may never do much; but let me think that I have not crossed your life in vain for you and for those whom your life can colour for good or for bad. As you are strong, be gentle; as you can love one, be kind to all; as you have so much that is

grand as Man—that is, the highest of God's works on earth,—let all your acts attach your manhood to the idea of Him, to whom the voice of the bell appeals. Ah ! the bell is hushed ; but not your heart, Tom,—that speaks still.”

Tom was weeping like a child.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now when our two travellers resumed their journey the relationship between them had undergone a change; nay, you might have said that their characters were also changed. For Tom found himself pouring out his turbulent heart to Kenelm, confiding to this philosophical scoffer at love all the passionate humanities of love—its hope, its anguish, its jealousy, its wrath—the all that links the gentlest of emotions to tragedy and terror. And Kenelm, listening tenderly, with softened eyes, uttered not one cynic word—nay, not one playful jest. He felt that the gravity of all he heard was too solemn for mockery, too deep even for comfort. True love of this sort was a thing he had never known, never wished to know, never thought

he could know, but he sympathised in it not the less. Strange, indeed, how much we do sympathise, on the stage, for instance, or in a book, with passions that have never agitated ourselves. Had Kenelm jested, or reasoned, or preached, Tom would have shrunk at once into dreary silence; but Kenelm said nothing, save now and then, as he rested his arm, brother-like, on the strong man's shoulder, he murmured, "poor fellow!" So, then, when Tom had finished his confessions, he felt wondrously relieved and comforted. He had cleansed his bosom of the perilous stuff that weighed upon the heart.

Was this good result effected by Kenelm's artful diplomacy, or by that insight into human passions vouchsafed, unconsciously to himself, by gleams or in flashes, to this strange man who surveyed the objects and pursuits of his fellows with a yearning desire to share them, murmuring to himself, "I cannot—I do not stand in this world; like a ghost I glide beside it, and look on"?

Thus the two men continued their way slowly, amid soft pastures and yellowing corn-fields, out at length into the dusty thoroughfares of the main road. That gained, their talk insensibly changed its tone—it became more commonplace, and Kenelm permitted himself the licence of those crotchets by which he extracted a sort of quaint pleasantry out of commonplace itself; so that from time to time Tom was startled into the mirth of laughter. This big fellow had one very agreeable gift, which is only granted, I think, to men of genuine character and affectionate dispositions—a spontaneous and sweet laugh, manly and frank, but not boisterous, as you might have supposed it would be. But that sort of laugh had not before come from his lips, since the day on which his love for Jessie Wiles had made him at war with himself and the world.

The sun was setting when from the brow of a hill they beheld the spires of Luscombe, embedded amid the level meadows that stretched below, watered by the same stream

that had wound along their more rural pathway, but which now expanded into stately width, and needed, to span it, a mighty bridge fit for the convenience of civilised traffic. The town seemed near, but it was full two miles off by road.

"There is a short cut across the fields beyond that stile, which leads straight to my uncle's house," said Tom; "and I daresay, sir, that you will be glad to escape the dirty suburb by which the road passes before we get into the town."

"A good thought, Tom. It is very odd that fine towns always are approached by dirty suburbs—a covert symbolical satire, perhaps, on the ways to success in fine towns. Avarice or ambition go through very mean little streets before they gain the place which they jostle the crowd to win—in the Town-hall or on 'Change. Happy the man who, like you, Tom, finds that there is a shorter and a cleaner and a pleasanter way to goal or to resting-place than that through the dirty suburbs!"

They met but few passengers on their path through the fields—a respectable, staid, elderly couple, who had the air of a Dissenting minister and his wife ; a girl of fourteen leading a little boy seven years younger by the hand ; a pair of lovers, evidently lovers at least to the eye of Tom Bowles—for, on regarding them as they passed unheeding him, he winced, and his face changed. Even after they had passed, Kenelm saw on the face that pain lingered there ; the lips were tightly compressed, and their corners gloomily drawn down.

Just at this moment a dog rushed towards them with a short quick bark—a Pomeranian dog with pointed nose and pricked ears. It hushed its bark as it neared Kenelm, sniffed his trousers, and wagged its tail.

“By the sacred Nine,” cried Kenelm, “thou art the dog with the tin tray ! where is thy master ?”

The dog seemed to understand the question, for it turned its head significantly, and Kenelm saw, seated under a lime-tree,

at a good distance from the path, a man, with book in hand, evidently employed in sketching.

“Come this way,” he said to Tom; “I recognise an acquaintance. You will like him.” Tom desired no new acquaintance at that moment, but he followed Kenelm submissively.

CHAPTER IX.

"You see we are fated to meet again," said Kenelm, stretching himself at his ease beside the Wandering Minstrel, and motioning Tom to do the same. "But you seem to add the accomplishment of drawing to that of verse-making! You sketch from what you call Nature?"

"From what I call Nature! yes, sometimes."

"And do you not find in drawing, as in verse-making, the truth that I have before sought to din into your reluctant ears—viz., that Nature has no voice except that which man breathes into her out of his mind? I would lay a wager that the sketch you are now taking is rather an attempt to make her embody some thought of your own,

than to present her outlines as they appear to any other observer. Permit me to judge for myself." And he bent over the sketch-book. It is often difficult for one who is not himself an artist nor a connoisseur, to judge whether the pencilled jottings in an impromptu sketch are by the hand of a professed master or a mere amateur. Kenelm was neither artist nor connoisseur, but the mere pencil-work seemed to him much what might be expected from any man with an accurate eye, who had taken a certain number of lessons from a good drawing-master. It was enough for him, however, that it furnished an illustration of his own theory. "I was right," he cried, triumphantly. "From this height there is a beautiful view, as it presents itself to me ; a beautiful view of the town, its meadows, its river, harmonised by the sunset ; for sunset, like gilding, unites conflicting colours, and softens them in uniting. But I see nothing of that view in your sketch. What I do see is to me mysterious."

"The view you suggest," said the minstrel, "is no doubt very fine, but it is for a Turner or a Claude to treat it. My grasp is not wide enough for such a landscape."

"I see indeed in your sketch but one figure, a child."

"Hist! there she stands. Hist! while I put in this last touch."

Kenelm strained his sight, and saw far off a solitary little girl, who was tossing something in the air (he could not distinguish what), and catching it as it fell. She seemed standing on the very verge of the upland, backed by rose-clouds gathered round the setting sun; below lay in confused outlines the great town. In the sketch those outlines seemed infinitely more confused, being only indicated by a few bold strokes; but the figure and face of the child were distinct and lovely. There was an ineffable sentiment in her solitude, there was a depth of quiet enjoyment in her mirthful play, and in her upturned eyes.

"But at that distance," asked Kenelm,

when the wanderer had finished his last touch, and, after contemplating it, silently closed his book, and turned round with a genial smile—"but at that distance, how can you distinguish the girl's face? How can you discover that the dim object she has just thrown up and recaught is a ball made of flowers? Do you know the child?"

"I never saw her before this evening; but as I was seated here she was straying around me alone, weaving into chains some wild-flowers which she had gathered by the hedges yonder, next the highroad; and as she strung them she was chanting to herself some pretty nursery rhymes. You can well understand that when I heard her thus chanting I became interested, and as she came near me I spoke to her, and we soon made friends. She told me she was an orphan, and brought up by a very old man distantly related to her, who had been in some small trade, and now lived in a crowded lane in the heart of the town. He was very kind to her, and being confined himself to

the house by age or ailment, he sent her out to play in the fields on summer Sundays. She had no companions of her own age. She said she did not like the other little girls in the lane; and the only little girl she liked at school had a grander station in life, and was not allowed to play with her, so she came out to play alone; and as long as the sun shines and the flowers bloom, she says she never wants other society."

"Tom, do you hear that? As you will be residing in Luscombe, find out this strange little girl, and be kind to her, Tom, for my sake."

Tom put his large hand upon Kenelm's, making no other answer; but he looked hard at the minstrel, recognised the genial charm of his voice and face, and slid along the grass nearer to him.

The minstrel continued: "While the child was talking to me I mechanically took the flower-chains from her hand, and not thinking what I was about, gathered them up into a ball. Suddenly she saw what I had done, and instead of scolding me for spoiling her

pretty chains, which I richly deserved, was delighted to find I had twisted them into a new plaything. She ran off with the ball, tossing it about till, excited with her own joy, she got to the brow of the hill, and I began my sketch."

"Is that charming face you have drawn like hers?"

"No; only in part. I was thinking of another face while I sketched, but it is not like that either; in fact, it is one of those patchworks which we call 'fancy heads,' and I meant it to be another version of a thought that I had just put into rhyme, when the child came across me."

"May we hear the rhyme?"

"I fear that if it did not bore yourself it would bore your friend."

"I am sure not. Tom, do you sing?"

"Well, I *have* sung," said Tom, hanging his head sheepishly, "and I should like to hear this gentleman."

"But I do not know these verses, just made, well enough to sing them; it is enough if I can recall them well enough to recite."

Here the minstrel paused a minute or so as if for recollection, and then, in the sweet clear tones, and the rare purity of enunciation which characterised his utterance, whether in recital or song, gave to the following verses a touching and a varied expression which no one could discover in merely reading them.

THE FLOWER-GIRL BY THE CROSSING.

By the muddy crossing in the crowded streets
 Stands a little maid with her basket full of posies,
 Proffering all who pass her choice of knitted sweets,
 Tempting Age with heart's-ease, courting Youth with
 roses.

Age disdains the heart's-ease,
 Love rejects the roses ;
 London life is busy—
 Who can stop for posies ?

One man is too grave, another is too gay—
 This man has his hothouse, that man not a penny ;
 Flowerets too are common in the month of May,
 And the things most common least attract the many.

Ill on London crossings
 Fares the sale of posies ;
 Age disdains the heart's-ease,
 Youth rejects the roses.

When the verse-maker had done, he did not pause for approbation, nor look modestly down, as do most people who recite their own verses, but unaffectedly thinking much more of his art than his audience, hurried on somewhat disconsolately—

“I see with great grief that I am better at sketching than rhyming. Can you” (appealing to Kenelm) “even comprehend what I mean by the verses?”

KENELM.—“Do you comprehend, Tom?”

TOM (in a whisper).—“No.”

KENELM.—“I presume that by his flower-girl our friend means to represent not only Poetry, but a poetry like his own, which is not at all the sort of poetry now in fashion. I, however, expand his meaning, and by his flower-girl I understand any image of natural truth or beauty for which, when we are living the artificial life of crowded streets, we are too busy to give a penny.”

“Take it as you please,” said the minstrel, smiling and sighing at the same time; “but

I have not expressed in words that which I did mean half so well as I have expressed it in my sketch-book."

"Ah! and how?" asked Kenelm.

"The Image of my thought in the sketch, be it Poetry or whatever you prefer to call it, does not stand forlorn in the crowded streets—the child stands on the brow of the green hill, with the city stretched in confused fragments below, and, thoughtless of pennies and passers-by, she is playing with the flowers she has gathered—but in play casting them heavenward, and following them with heavenward eyes."

"Good!" muttered Kenelm—"good!" and then, after a long pause, he added, in a still lower mutter, "Pardon me that remark of mine the other day about a beefsteak. But own that I am right—what you call a sketch from Nature is but a sketch of your own thought."

CHAPTER X.

THE child with the flower-ball had vanished from the brow of the hill ; sinking down amid the streets below, the rose-clouds had faded from the horizon ; and night was closing round, as the three men entered the thick of the town. Tom pressed Kenelm to accompany him to his uncle's, promising him a hearty welcome and bed and board, but Kenelm declined. He entertained a strong persuasion that it would be better for the desired effect on Tom's mind that he should be left alone with his relations that night, but proposed that they should spend the next day together, and agreed to call at the veterinary surgeon's in the morning.

When Tom quitted them at his uncle's door, Kenelm said to the minstrel, "I sup-

pose you are going to some inn—may I accompany you? We can sup together, and I should like to hear you talk upon poetry and Nature.”

“You flatter me much; but I have friends in the town, with whom I lodge, and they are expecting me. Do you not observe that I have changed my dress? I am not known here as the ‘Wandering Minstrel.’”

Kenelm glanced at the man’s attire, and for the first time observed the change. It was still picturesque in its way, but it was such as gentlemen of the highest rank frequently wear in the country—the knickerbocker costume—very neat, very new, and complete, to the square-toed shoes with their latches and buckles.

“I fear,” said Kenelm, gravely, “that your change of dress betokens the neighbourhood of those pretty girls of whom you spoke in an earlier meeting. According to the Darwinian doctrine of selection, fine plumage goes far in deciding the preference of Jenny Wren and her sex, only we are told

that fine-feathered birds are very seldom songsters as well. It is rather unfair to rivals when you unite both attractions."

The minstrel laughed. "There is but one girl in my friend's house—his niece; she is very plain, and only thirteen. But to me the society of women, whether ugly or pretty, is an absolute necessity; and I have been trudging without it for so many days that I can scarcely tell you how my thoughts seemed to shake off the dust of travel when I found myself again in the presence of——"

"Petticoat interest," interrupted Kenelm. "Take care of yourself. My poor friend with whom you found me is a grave warning against petticoat interest, from which I hope to profit. He is passing through a great sorrow; it might have been worse than sorrow. My friend is going to stay in this town. If you are staying here too, pray let him see something of you. It will do him a wondrous good if you can beguile him from this real life into the gardens of poet-land; but do not sing nor talk of love to him."

"I honour all lovers," said the minstrel, with real tenderness in his tone, "and would willingly serve to cheer or comfort your friend, if I could; but I am bound elsewhere, and must leave Luscombe, which I visit on business—money business—the day after to-morrow."

"So, too, must I. At least give us both some hours of your time to-morrow."

"Certainly; from twelve to sunset I shall be roving about—a mere idler. If you will both come with me, it will be a great pleasure to myself. Agreed! Well, then, I will call at your inn to-morrow at twelve; and I recommend for your inn the one facing us—The Golden Lamb. I have heard it recommended for the attributes of civil people and good fare."

Kenelm felt that he here received his *congé*, and well comprehended the fact that the minstrel, desiring to preserve the secret of his name, did not give the address of the family with whom he was a guest.

"But one word more," said Kenelm.

“Your host or hostess, if resident here, can, no doubt, from your description of the little girl and the old man her protector, learn the child’s address. If so, I should like my companion to make friends with her. Petticoat interest there at least will be innocent and safe. And I know nothing so likely to keep a big, passionate heart like Tom’s, now aching with a horrible void, occupied and softened, and turned to directions pure and gentle, as an affectionate interest in a little child.”

The minstrel changed colour—he even started.

“Sir, are you a wizard that you say that to me?”

“I am not a wizard, but I guess from your question that you have a little child of your own. So much the better; the child may keep you out of much mischief. Remember the little child. Good evening.”

Kenelm crossed the threshold of the Golden Lamb, engaged his room, made his ablutions, ordered, and, with his usual zest,

partook of his evening meal; and then, feeling the pressure of that melancholic temperament which he so strangely associated with Herculean constitutions, roused himself up, and, seeking a distraction from thought, sauntered forth into the gaslit streets.

It was a large, handsome town—handsomer than Tor-Hadham, on account of its site in a valley surrounded by wooded hills, and watered by the fair stream whose windings we have seen as a brook—handsomer, also, because it boasted a fair cathedral, well cleared to the sight, and surrounded by venerable old houses, the residences of the clergy, or of the quiet lay gentry with mediæval tastes. The main street was thronged with passengers—some soberly returning home from the evening service—some, the younger, lingering in pleasant promenade with their sweethearts or families, or arm in arm with each other, and having the air of bachelors or maidens unattached. Through this street Kenelm passed with

inattentive eye. A turn to the right took him towards the cathedral and its surroundings. There all was solitary. The solitude pleased him, and he lingered long, gazing on the noble church lifting its spires and turrets into the deep blue starry air.

Musingly, then, he strayed on, entering a labyrinth of gloomy lanes, in which, though the shops were closed, many a door stood open, with men of the working class lolling against the threshold, idly smoking their pipes, or women seated on the door-steps gossiping, while noisy children were playing or quarrelling in the kennel. The whole did not present the indolent side of an English Sabbath in the pleasantest and rosiest point of view. Somewhat quickening his steps, he entered a broader street, attracted to it involuntarily by a bright light in the centre. On nearing the light he found that it shone forth from a gin-palace, of which the mahogany doors opened and shut momentarily, as customers went in and out. It was the handsomest building he had

seen in his walk, next to that of the cathedral. "The new civilisation *versus* the old," murmured Kenelm. As he so murmured, a hand was laid on his arm with a sort of timid impudence. He looked down, and saw a young face, but it had survived the look of youth; it was worn and hard, and the bloom on it was not that of Nature's giving. "Are you kind to-night?" asked a husky voice.

"Kind!" said Kenelm, with mournful tones and softened eyes—"kind! Alas, my poor sister mortal! if pity be kindness, who can see you and not be kind?"

The girl released his arm, and he walked on. She stood some moments gazing after him till out of sight, then she drew her hand suddenly across her eyes, and retracing her steps, was, in her turn, caught hold of by a rougher hand than hers, as she passed the gin-palace. She shook off the grasp with a passionate scorn, and went straight home. Home! is that the right word? Poor sister mortal!

CHAPTER XI.

AND now Kenelm found himself at the extremity of the town, and on the banks of the river. Small squalid houses still lined the bank for some way, till, nearing the bridge, they abruptly ceased, and he passed through a broad square again into the main street. On the other side of the street there was a row of villa-like mansions, with gardens stretching towards the river.

All around in the thoroughfare was silent and deserted. By this time the passengers had gone home. The scent of night-flowers from the villa gardens came sweet on the starlit air. Kenelm paused to inhale it, and then lifting his eyes, hitherto downcast, as are the eyes of men in meditative moods, he beheld, on the balcony of the nearest villa, a

group of well-dressed persons. The balcony was unusually wide and spacious. On it was a small round table, on which were placed wine and fruits. Three ladies were seated round the table on wire-work chairs, and on the side nearest to Kenelm, one man. In that man, now slightly turning his profile, as if to look towards the river, Kenelm recognised the minstrel. He was still in his picturesque knickerbocker dress, and his clear-cut features, with the clustering curls of hair, and Rubens-like hue and shape of beard, had more than their usual beauty, softened in the light of skies, to which the moon, just risen, added deeper and fuller radiance. The ladies were in evening dress, but Kenelm could not distinguish their faces, hidden behind the minstrel. He moved softly across the street, and took his stand behind a buttress in the low wall of the garden, from which he could have full view of the balcony, unseen himself. In this watch he had no other object than that of a vague pleasure. The whole grouping had in it a kind of

scenic romance, and he stopped as one stops before a picture.

He then saw that of the three ladies one was old ; another was a slight girl, of the age of twelve or thirteen ; the third appeared to be somewhere about seven or eight and twenty. She was dressed with more elegance than the others. On her neck, only partially veiled by a thin scarf, there was the glitter of jewels ; and, as she now turned her full face towards the moon, Kenelm saw that she was very handsome—a striking kind of beauty, calculated to fascinate a poet or an artist—not unlike Raffaele's Fornarina, dark, with warm tints.

Now there appeared at the open window a stout, burly, middle-aged gentleman, looking every inch of him a family man, a moneyed man, sleek and prosperous. He was bald, fresh-coloured, and with light whiskers.

“Holloa,” he said, in an accent very slightly foreign, and with a loud clear voice, which Kenelm heard distinctly, “is it not time for you to come in ?”

"Don't be so tiresome, Fritz," said the handsome lady, half petulantly, half playfully, in the way ladies address the tiresome spouses whom they lord it over. "Your friend has been sulking the whole evening, and is only just beginning to be pleasant as the moon rises."

"The moon has a good effect on poets and other mad folks, I daresay," said the bald man, with a good-humoured laugh. "But I can't have my little niece laid up again just as she is on the mend—Annie, come in."

The girl obeyed reluctantly. The old lady rose too.

"Ah, mother, you are wise," said the bald man; "and a game at *euchre* is safer than poetising in night air." He wound his arm round the old lady with a careful fondness, for she moved with some difficulty as if rather lame. "As for you two sentimentalists and moongazers, I give you ten minutes' law—not more, mind."

"Tyrant!" said the minstrel.

The balcony now only held two forms—

the minstrel and the handsome lady. The window was closed, and partially veiled by muslin draperies, but Kenelm caught glimpses of the room within. He could see that the room, lit by a lamp on the centre table, and candles elsewhere, was decorated and fitted up with cost, and in a taste not English. He could see, for instance, that the ceiling was painted, and the walls were not papered, but painted in panels between arabesque pilasters.

"They are foreigners," thought Kenelm, "though the man does speak English so well. That accounts for playing *euchre* of a Sunday evening, as if there were no harm in it. *Euchre* is an American game. The man is called Fritz. Ah! I guess—Germans who have lived a good deal in America; and the verse-maker said he was at Luscombe on pecuniary business. Doubtless his host is a merchant, and the verse-maker in some commercial firm. That accounts for his concealment of name, and fear of its being known that he was addicted, in his holiday, to tastes and habits so opposed to his calling."

While he was thus thinking, the lady had drawn her chair close to the minstrel, and was speaking to him with evident earnestness, but in tones too low for Kenelm to hear. Still it seemed to him, by her manner and by the man's look, as if she were speaking in some sort of reproach, which he sought to deprecate. Then he spoke, also in a whisper, and she averted her face for a moment—then she held out her hand, and the minstrel kissed it. Certainly, thus seen, the two might well be taken for lovers ; and the soft night, the fragrance of the flowers, silence and solitude, stars and moonlight, all girt them as with an atmosphere of love. Presently the man rose and leaned over the balcony, propping his cheek on his hand, and gazing on the river. The lady rose too, and also leaned over the balustrade, her dark hair almost touching the auburn locks of her companion.

Kenelm sighed. Was it from envy, from pity, from fear ? I know not ; but he sighed.

After a brief pause, the lady said, still in

low tones, but not too low this time to escape Kenelm's fine sense of hearing—

“Tell me those verses again. I must remember every word of them when you are gone.”

The man shook his head gently, and answered, but inaudibly.

“Do,” said the lady, “set them to music later ; and the next time you come I will sing them. I have thought of a title for them.”

“What ?” asked the minstrel.

“Love's Quarrel.”

The minstrel turned his head, and their eyes met, and, in meeting, lingered long. Then he moved away, and with face turned from her and towards the river, gave the melody of his wondrous voice to the following lines :—

LOVE'S QUARREL.

Standing by the river, gazing on the river,
See it paved with starbeams ; heaven is at our feet.
Now the wave is troubled, now the rushes quiver ;
Vanished is the starlight—it was a deceit.

Comes a little cloudlet 'twixt ourselves and heaven,
And from all the river fades the silver track ;
Put thine arms around me, whisper low, "Forgiven!"—
See how on the river starlight settles back.

When he had finished, still with face turned aside, the lady did not, indeed, whisper "forgiven," nor put her arms around him ; but, as if by irresistible impulse, she laid her hand lightly on his shoulder.

The minstrel started.

There came to his ear—he knew not from whence, from whom—

"Mischief — mischief ! Remember the little child !"

"Hush !" he said, staring round. "Did you not hear a voice ?"

"Only yours," said the lady.

"It was our guardian angel's, Amalie. It came in time. We will go within."

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning betimes, Kenelmi visited Tom at his uncle's home. A comfortable and respectable home it was, like that of an owner in easy circumstances. The veterinary surgeon himself was intelligent, and apparently educated beyond the range of his calling; a childless widower, between sixty and seventy, living with a sister, an old maid. They were evidently much attached to Tom, and delighted by the hope of keeping him with them. Tom himself looked rather sad, but not sullen, and his face brightened wonderfully at first sight of Kenelm. That oddity made himself as pleasant and as much like other people as he could in conversing with the old widower and the old maid, and took leave, engaging

Tom to be at his inn at half-past twelve, and spend the day with him and the minstrel. He then returned to the Golden Lamb, and waited there for his first visitant, the minstrel.

That votary of the muse arrived punctually at twelve o'clock. His countenance was less cheerful and sunny than usual. Kenelm made no allusion to the scene he had witnessed, nor did his visitor seem to suspect that Kenelm had witnessed it, or been the utterer of that warning voice.

KENELM.—“I have asked my friend Tom Bowles to come a little later, because I wished you to be of use to him, and in order to be so, I should suggest how :—”

THE MINSTREL.—“Pray do.”

KENELM.—“You know that I am not a poet, and I do not have much reverence for verse-making, merely as a craft.”

THE MINSTREL.—“Neither have I.”

KENELM.—“But I have a great reverence for poetry as a priesthood. I felt that reverence for you when you sketched and talked

priesthood last evening, and placed in my heart—I hope for ever while it beats—the image of the child on the sunlit hill, high above the abodes of men, tossing her flower-ball heavenward, and with heavenward eyes.”

The singer’s cheek coloured high, and his lip quivered ; he was very sensitive to praise—most singers are.

Kenelm resumed, “I have been educated in the Realistic school, and with realism I am discontented, because in realism as a school there is no truth. It contains but a bit of truth, and that the coldest and hardest bit of it, and he who utters a bit of truth and suppresses the rest of it, tells a lie.”

THE MINSTREL (slyly).—“Does the critic who says to me, ‘Sing of beefsteak, because the appetite for food is a real want of daily life, and don’t sing of art and glory and love, because in daily life a man may do without such ideas,’—tell a lie?”

KENELM.—“Thank you for that rebuke. I submit to it. No doubt I did tell a lie

—that is, if I were quite in earnest in my recommendation ; and if not in earnest, why——”

THE MINSTREL.—“ You belied yourself.”

KENELM.—“ Very likely. I set out on my travels to escape from shams, and begin to discover that I am a sham *par excellence*. But I suddenly come across you, as a boy dulled by his syntax and his vulgar fractions suddenly comes across a pleasant poem or a picture-book, and feels his wits brighten up. I owe you much ; you have done me a world of good.”

“ I cannot guess how.”

“ Possibly not, but you have shown me how the realism of Nature herself takes colour and life and soul when seen on the ideal or poetic side of it. It is not exactly the words that you say or sing that do me the good, but they awaken within me new trains of thought, which I seek to follow out. The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatises, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself. Therefore,

O singer! whatever be the worth in critical eyes of your songs, I am glad to remember that you would like to go through the world always singing."

"Pardon me; you forget that I added, 'if life were always young; and the seasons were always summer.'"

"I do not forget. But if youth and summer fade for you, you leave youth and summer behind you as you pass along—behind in hearts which mere realism would make always old, and counting their slothful beats under the grey of a sky without sun or stars; wherefore I pray you to consider how magnificent a mission the singer's is—to harmonise your life with your song, and toss your flowers, as your child does, heavenward, with heavenward eyes. Think only of this when you talk with my sorrowing friend, and you will do him good, as you have done me, without being able to guess how a seeker after the Beautiful, such as you, carries us along with him on his way; so that we, too, look out for beauty, and

see it in the wild-flowers to which we had been blind before."

Here Tom entered the little sanded parlour where this dialogue had been held, and the three men sallied forth, taking the shortest cut from the town into the fields and woodlands.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHETHER or not his spirits were raised by Kenelm's praise and exhortations, the minstrel that day talked with a charm that spell-bound Tom, and Kenelm was satisfied with brief remarks on his side tending to draw out the principal performer.

The talk was drawn from outward things, from natural objects—objects that interest children, and men who, like Tom Bowles, have been accustomed to view surroundings more with the heart's eye than the mind's eye. This rover about the country knew much of the habits of birds and beasts and insects, and told anecdotes of them with a mixture of humour and pathos, which fascinated Tom's attention, made him laugh

heartily, and sometimes brought tears into his big blue eyes.

They dined at an inn by the wayside, and the dinner was mirthful; then they wended their way slowly back. By the declining daylight their talk grew somewhat graver, and Kenelm took more part in it. Tom listened mute—still fascinated. At length, as the town came in sight, they agreed to halt awhile, in a bosky nook soft with mosses and sweet with wild thyme.

There, as they lay stretched at their ease, the birds hymning vesper songs amid the boughs above, or dropping, noiseless and fearless, for their evening food on the swards around them, the wanderer said to Kenelm—
“You tell me that you are no poet, yet I am sure you have a poet’s perception; you must have written poetry?”

“Not I; as I before told you, only school verses in dead languages; but I found in my knapsack this morning a copy of some rhymes, made by a fellow-collegian, which I

put into my pocket, meaning to read them to you both. They are not verses like yours, which evidently burst from you spontaneously, and are not imitated from any other poets. These verses were written by a Scotchman, and smack of imitation from the old ballad style. There is little to admire in the words themselves, but there is something in the idea which struck me as original, and impressed me sufficiently to keep a copy, and somehow or other it got into the leaves of one of the two books I carried with me from home."

"What are those books? Books of poetry both, I will venture to wager——"

"Wrong! Both metaphysical, and dry as a bone. Tom, light your pipe, and you, sir, lean more at ease on your elbow; I should warn you that the ballad is long. Patience!"

"Attention!" said the minstrel.

"Fire!" added Tom.

Kenelm began to read—and he read well—

LORD RONALD'S BRIDE.

PART I.

"WHY gathers the crowd in the Market-place
Ere the stars have yet left the sky?"

"For a holiday show and an act of grace—
At the sunrise a witch shall die."

"What deed has she done to deserve that doom—
Has she blighted the standing corn,
Or rifled for philtres a dead man's tomb,
Or rid mothers of babes new-born?"

"Her pact with the Fiend was not thus revealed,
She taught sinners the Word to hear;
The hungry she fed, and the sick she healed,
And was held as a Saint last year.

"But a holy man, who at Rome had been,
Had discovered, by book and bell,
That the marvels she wrought were through arts unclean,
And the lies of the Prince of Hell.

"And our Mother the Church, for the dame was rich,
And her husband was Lord of Clyde,
Would fain have been mild to this saint-like witch
If her sins she had not denied.

"But hush, and come nearer to see the sight,
Sheriff, halberds, and torchmen,—look!
That's the witch, standing mute in her garb of white,
By the priest with his bell and book."

So the witch was consumed on the sacred pyre,
And the priest grew in power and pride,
And the witch left a son to succeed his sire
In the halls and the lands of Clyde.

And the infant waxed comely and strong and brave,
But his manhood had scarce begun,
When his vessel was launched on the northern wave,
To the shores which are near the sun.

PART II.

Lord Ronald has come to his halls in Clyde
With a bride of some unknown race :
Compared with the man who would kiss that bride
Wallace wight were a coward base.

Her eyes had the glare of the mountain-cat
When it springs on the hunter's spear ;
At the head of the board when that lady sate
Hungry men could not eat for fear.

And the tones of her voice had the deadly growl
Of the bloodhound that scents its prey ;
No storm was so dark as that lady's scowl
Under tresses of wintry grey.

“ Lord Ronald ! men marry for love or gold,
Mickle rich must have been thy bride ! ”
“ Man's heart may be bought, woman's hand be sold,
On the banks of our northern Clyde.

"My bride is, in sooth, mickle rich to me
Though she brought not a groat in dower,
For her face, couldst thou see it as I do see,
Is the fairest in hall or bower!"

Quoth the bishop one day to our lord the king,
"Satan reigns on the Clyde alway,
And the taint in the blood of the witch doth cling
To the child that she brought to day.

"Lord Ronald hath come from the Paynim land
With a bride that appals the sight;
Like his dam she hath moles on her dread right hand,
And she turns to a snake at night.

"It is plain that a Scot who can blindly dote
On the face of an Eastern ghoul,
And a ghoul who was worth not a silver groat,
Is a Scot who has lost his soul.

"It were wise to have done with this demon tree
Which has teemed with such cankered fruit:
Add the soil where it stands to my holy See,
And consign to the flames its root."

"Holy man!" quoth King James, and he laughed,
"we know
That thy tongue never wags in vain,
But the Church cist is full, and the king's is low,
And the Clyde is a fair domain.

“Yet a knight that’s bewitched by a laidly fere
Needs not much to dissolve the spell ;
We will summon the bride and the bridegroom here,
Be at hand with thy book and bell.”

PART III.

Lord Ronald stood up in King James’s court,
And his dame by his dauntless side ;
The barons who came in the hopes of sport
Shook with fright when they saw the bride.

The bishop, though armed with his bell and book,
Grew as white as if turned to stone,
It was only our king who could face that look,
But he spoke with a trembling tone :

“Lord Ronald, the knights of thy race and mine
Should have mates in their own degree;
What parentage, say, hath that bride of thine
Who hath come from the far countree ?

“And what was her dowry in gold or land,
Or what was the charm, I pray,
That a comely young gallant should woo the hand
Of the ladye we see to day ?”

And the lords would have laughed, but that awful
dame
Struck them dumb with her thunder-frown :
“Saucy king, did I utter my father’s name,
Thou wouldst kneel as his liegeman down.

“ Though I brought to Lord Ronald nor lands nor gold,
Nor the bloom of a fading cheek ;
Yet, were I a widow, both young and old
Would my hand and my dowry seek.

“ For the wish that he covets the most below,
And would hide from the saints above,
Which he dares not to pray for in weal or woe,
Is the dowry I bring my love.

“ Let every man look in his heart and see
What the wish he most lusts to win,
And then let him fasten his eyes on me
While he thinks of his darling sin.”

And every man,—bishop, and lord and king,—
Thought of that he most wished to win,
And, fixing his eye on that gruesome thing,
He beheld his own darling sin.

No longer a ghoul in that face he saw,
It was fair as a boy's first love ;
The voice which had curdled his veins with awe
Was the coo of the woodland dove.

Each heart was on flame for the peerless dame
At the price of the husband's life ;
Bright claymores flash out, and loud voices shout,
“ In thy widow shall be my wife.”

Then darkness fell over the palace hall,
More dark and more dark it fell,
And a death-groan boomed hoarse underneath the pall,
And was drowned amid roar and yell.

When Light through the lattice-pane stole once more,
It was grey as a wintry dawn,
And the bishop lay cold on the regal floor,
With a stain on his robes of lawn.

Lord Ronald was standing beside the dead,
In the scabbard he plunged his sword,
And with visage as wan as the corpse, he said,
“Lo ! my ladye hath kept her word.

“Now I leave her to others to woo and win,
For no longer I find her fair ;
Could I look on the face of my darling sin,
I should see but a dead man’s there.

“And the dowry she brought me is here returned,
For the wish of my heart has died,
It is quenched in the blood of the priest who burned
My sweet mother, the Saint of Clyde.”

Lord Ronald strode over the stony floor,
Not a hand was outstretched to stay ;
Lord Ronald has passed through the gaping door,
Not an eye ever traced his way.

And the ladye, left widowed, was prized above
All the maidens in hall and bower,
Many bartered their lives for that ladye’s love,
And their souls for that ladye’s dower.

God grant that the wish which I dare not pray
Be not that which I lust to win,
And that ever I look with my first dismay
On the face of my darling sin !

As he ceased, Kenelm's eye fell on Tom's face up-turned to his own, with open lips, and intent stare, and paled cheeks, and a look of that higher sort of terror which belongs to awe. The man, then recovering himself, tried to speak, and attempted a sickly smile, but neither would do. He rose abruptly and walked away, crept under the shadow of a dark beech-tree, and stood there leaning against the trunk.

"What say you to the ballad?" asked Kenelm of the singer.

"It is not without power," answered he.

"Ay, of a certain kind."

The minstrel looked hard at Kenelm, and dropped his eyes, with a heightened glow on his cheek.

"The Scotch are a thoughtful race. The Scot who wrote this thing may have thought of a day when he saw beauty in the face of a darling sin; but if so, it is evident that his sight recovered from that glamour. Shall we walk on? Come, Tom."

The minstrel left them at the entrance of

the town, saying, "I regret that I cannot see more of either of you, as I quit Luscombe at daybreak. Here, by the by, I forgot to give it before, is the address you wanted."

KENELM.—"Of the little child. I am glad you remembered her."

The minstrel again looked hard at Kenelm, this time without dropping his eyes. Kenelm's expression of face was so simply quiet that it might be almost called vacant.

Kenelm and Tom continued to walk on towards the veterinary surgeon's house, for some minutes silently. Then Tom said in a whisper, "Did not you mean those rhymes to hit me here—*here*," and he struck his breast.

"The rhymes were written long before I saw you, Tom ; but it is well if their meaning strike us all. Of you, my friend, I have no fear now. Are you not already a changed man ? "

"I feel as if I were going through a change," answered Tom, in slow, dreary accents. In

hearing you and that gentleman talk so much of things that I never thought of, I felt something in me—you will laugh when I tell you—something like a bird.”

“Like a bird—good!—a bird has wings.”

“Just so.”

“And you felt wings that you were unconscious of before, fluttering and beating themselves as against the wires of a cage. You were true to your instincts then, my dear fellow-man—instincts of space and heaven. Courage!—the cage-door will open soon. And now, practically speaking, I give you this advice in parting: you have a quick and sensitive mind which you have allowed that strong body of yours to incarcerate and suppress. Give that mind fair play. Attend to the business of your calling diligently: the craving for regular work is the healthful appetite of mind; but in your spare hours cultivate the new ideas which your talk with men who have been accustomed to cultivate the mind more than the body, has sown within you. Belong to a book-club, and interest yourself

in books. A wise man has said, 'Books widen the present by adding to it the past and the future.' Seek the company of educated men and educated women too; and when you are angry with another, reason with him—don't knock him down; and don't be knocked down yourself by an enemy much stronger than yourself—Drink. Do all this, and when I see you again you will be——"

"Stop, sir—you will see me again?"

"Yes, if we both live, I promise it."

"When."

"You see, Tom, we have both of us something in our old selves which we must work off. You will work off your something by repose, and I must work off mine, if I can, by moving about. So I am on my travels. May we both have new selves better than the old selves, when we again shake hands. For your part try your best, dear Tom, and heaven prosper you."

"And heaven bless you!" cried Tom, fervently, with tears rolling unheeded from his bold blue eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH Kenelm left Luscombe on Tuesday morning, he did not appear at Neesdale Park till the Wednesday, a little before the dressing-bell for dinner. His adventures in the interim are not worth repeating. He had hoped he might fall in again with the minstrel, but he did not.

His portmanteau had arrived, and he heaved a sigh as he cased himself in a gentleman's evening dress, "Alas! I have soon got back again into my own skin."

There were several other guests in the house, though not a large party. They had been asked with an eye to the approaching election, consisting of squires and clergy from remoter parts of the county. Chief among the guests in rank and importance,

and rendered by the occasion the central object of interest, was George Belvoir.

Kenelm bore his part in this society with a resignation that partook of repentance.

The first day he spoke very little, and was considered a very dull young man by the lady he took in to dinner. Mr Travers in vain tried to draw him out. He had anticipated much amusement from the eccentricities of his guest, who had talked volubly enough in the fernery, and was sadly disappointed. "I feel," he whispered to Mrs Campion, "like poor Lord Pomfret, who, charmed with Punch's lively conversation, bought him, and was greatly surprised that, when he had once brought him home, Punch would not talk."

"But your Punch listens," said Mrs Campion, "and he observes."

George Belvoir, on the other hand, was universally declared to be very agreeable. Though not naturally jovial, he forced himself to appear so—laughing loud with the squires, and entering heartily with their

wives and daughters into such topics as county-balls and croquet-parties; and when after dinner he had, Cato-like, 'warmed his virtue with wine,' the virtue came out very lustily in praise of good men—viz., men of his own party,—and anathema on bad men—viz., men of the other party.

Now and then he appealed to Kenelm, and Kenelm always returned the same answer, "There is much in what you say."

The first evening closed in the usual way in country-houses. There was some lounging under moonlight on the terrace before the house; then there was some singing by young lady amateurs, and a rubber of whist for the elders; then wine-and-water, hand-candlesticks, a smoking-room for those who smoked, and bed for those who did not.

In the course of the evening, Cecilia, partly in obedience to the duties of hostess, and partly from that compassion for shyness which kindly and high-bred persons entertain, had gone a little out of her way to allure Kenelm forth from the estranged solitude he had

contrived to weave around him ; in vain for the daughter as for the father. He replied to her with the quiet self-possession which should have convinced her that no man on earth was less entitled to indulgence for the gentlemanlike infirmity of shyness, and no man less needed the duties of any hostess for the augmentation of his comforts, or rather for his diminished sense of discomfort ; but his replies were in monosyllables, and made with the air of a man who says in his heart, " If this creature would but leave me alone ! "

Cecilia, for the first time in her life, was piqued, and, strange to say, began to feel more interest about this indifferent stranger than about the popular, animated, pleasant George Belvoir, whom she knew by womanly instinct was as much in love with her as he could be.

Cecilia Travers that night on retiring to rest told her maid, smilingly, that she was too tired to have her hair done ; and yet, when the maid was dismissed, she looked at

herself in the glass more gravely and more discontentedly than she had ever looked there before ; and, tired though she was, stood at the window gazing into the moonlit night for a good hour after the maid had left her.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM CHILLINGLY has now been several days a guest at Neesdale Park. He has recovered speech ; the other guests have gone, including George Belvoir. Leopold Travers has taken a great fancy to Kenelm. Leopold was one of those men, not uncommon perhaps in England, who, with great mental energies, have little book-knowledge, and when they come in contact with a book-reader who is not a pedant, feel a pleasant excitement in his society, a source of interest in comparing notes with him, a constant surprise in finding by what venerable authorities the deductions which their own mother-wit has drawn from life are supported ; or by what cogent arguments, derived from books, those deductions are contravened or upset. Leopold

Travers had in him that sense of humour which generally accompanies a strong practical understanding, (no man, for instance, has more practical understanding than a Scot, and no man has a keener susceptibility to humour), and not only enjoyed Kenelm's odd way of expressing himself, but very often mistook Kenelm's irony for opinion spoken in earnest.

Since his early removal from the capital and his devotion to agricultural pursuits, it was so seldom that Leopold Travers met a man by whose conversation his mind was diverted to other subjects than those which were incidental to the commonplace routine of his life, that he found in Kenelm's views of men and things a source of novel amusement, and a stirring appeal to such metaphysical creeds of his own as had been formed unconsciously, and had long reposed unexamined in the recesses of an intellect shrewd and strong, but more accustomed to dictate than to argue. Kenelm, on his side, saw much in his host to like and to admire; but, reversing their relative positions in

point of years, he conversed with Travers as with a mind younger than his own. Indeed, it was one of his crotchety theories that each generation is in substance mentally older than the generation preceding it, especially in all that relates to science; and, as he would say, "The study of life is a science, and not an art."

But Cecilia, — what impression did she create upon the young visitor? Was he alive to the charms of her rare beauty, to the grace of a mind sufficiently stored for commune with those who love to think and to imagine, and yet sufficiently feminine and playful to seize the sportive side of realities, and allow their proper place to the trifles which make the sum of human things? An impression she did make, and that impression was new to him and pleasing. Nay, sometimes in her presence, and sometimes when alone, he fell into abstracted consultations with himself, saying, "Kenelm Chillingly, now that thou hast got back into thy proper skin, dost thou not think that thou hadst better remain there? Couldst thou

not be contented with thy lot as erring descendant of Adam, if thou couldst win for thy mate so faultless a descendant of Eve as now flits before thee?" But he could not extract from himself any satisfactory answer to the questions he had addressed to himself.

Once he said abruptly to Travers, as, on their return from their rambles, they caught a glimpse of Cecilia's light form bending over the flower-beds on the lawn, "Do you admire Virgil?"

"To say truth, I have not read Virgil since I was a boy; and, between you and me, I then thought him rather monotonous."

"Perhaps because his verse is so smooth in its beauty?"

"Probably. When one is very young one's taste is faulty; and if a poet is not faulty, we are apt to think he wants vivacity and fire."

"Thank you for your lucid explanation," answered Kenelm, adding musingly to himself, "I am afraid I should yawn very often if I were married to a Miss Virgil."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE house of Mr Travers contained a considerable collection of family portraits, few of them well painted, but the Squire was evidently proud of such evidences of ancestry. They not only occupied a considerable space on the walls of the reception rooms, but swarmed into the principal sleeping chambers, and smiled or frowned on the beholder from dark passages and remote lobbies. One morning Cecilia, on her way to the China Closet, found Kenelm gazing very intently upon a female portrait consigned to one of these obscure receptacles by which through a back staircase he gained the only approach from the hall to his chamber.

"I don't pretend to be a good judge of paintings," said Kenelm, as Cecilia paused

beside him ; “but it strikes me that this picture is very much better than most of those to which places of honour are assigned in your collection. And the face itself is so lovely, that it would add an embellishment to the princeliest galleries.”

“Yes,” said Cecilia, with a half-sigh. “The face is lovely, and the portrait is considered one of Lely’s rarest masterpieces. It used to hang over the chimney-piece in the drawing-room. My father had it placed here many years ago.”

“Perhaps because he discovered it was not a family portrait ?”

“On the contrary — because it grieves him to think it is a family portrait. Hush ! I hear his footstep ; don’t speak of it to him ; don’t let him see you looking at it. The subject is very painful to him.”

Here Cecilia vanished into the China Closet, and Kenelm turned off to his own room.

What sin committed by the original in the time of Charles II., but only discovered

in the reign of Victoria, could have justified Leopold Travers in removing the most pleasing portrait in the house from the honoured place it had occupied, and banishing it to so obscure a recess? Kenelm said no more on the subject, and indeed an hour afterwards had dismissed it from his thoughts. The next day he rode out with Travers and Cecilia. Their way passed through quiet shady lanes without any purposed direction, when suddenly, at the spot where three of those lanes met on an angle of common ground, a lonely grey tower, in the midst of a wide space of grass land which looked as if it had once been a park, with huge boles of pollarded oak dotting the space here and there, rose before them.

"Cissy!" cried Travers, angrily reining in his horse and stopping short in a political discussion which he had forced upon Kenelm—"Cissy! How comes this! We have taken the wrong turn! No matter, I see there," pointing to the right, "the chimney-pots of old Mondell's homestead. He has not yet

promised his vote to George Belvoir. I'll go and have a talk with him. Turn back, you and Mr Chillingly—meet me at Turner's Green, and wait for me there till I come. I need not excuse myself to you, Chillingly. A vote is a vote." So saying, the Squire, whose ordinary riding-horse was an old hunter, halted, turned, and, no gate being visible, put the horse over a stiff fence and vanished in the direction of old Mondell's chimney-pots. Kenelm, scarcely hearing his host's instructions to Cecilia and excuses to himself, remained still and gazing on the old grey tower thus abruptly obtruded on his view.

Though no learned antiquarian like his father, Kenelm had a strange fascinating interest in all relics of the past; and old grey towers, where they are not church towers, are very rarely to be seen in England. All around the old grey tower spoke with an unutterable mournfulness of a past in ruins: you could see remains of some large Gothic building once attached to it,

rising here and there in fragments of deeply-buttressed walls; you could see in a dry ditch, between high ridges, where there had been a fortified moat; nay, you could even see where once had been the bailey hill from which a baron of old had dispensed justice. Seldom indeed does the most acute of antiquarians discover that remnant of Norman times on lands still held by the oldest of Anglo-Norman families. Then, the wild nature of the demesne around; those ranges of sward, with those old giant oak-trunks, hollowed within and pollarded at top; all spoke, in unison with the grey tower, of a past as remote from the reign of Victoria as the Pyramids are from the sway of the Viceroy of Egypt.

"Let us turn back," said Miss Travers; "my father would not like me to stay here."

"Pardon me a moment. I wish my father were here; he would stay till sunset. But what is the history of that old tower?—a history it must have."

"Every home has a history—even a

peasant's hut," said Cecilia. "But do pardon me if I ask you to comply with my father's request. I at least must turn back."

Thus commanded, Kenelm reluctantly withdrew his gaze from the ruin and regained Cecilia, who was already some paces in return down the lane.

"I am far from a very inquisitive man by temperament," said Kenelm, "so far as the affairs of the living are concerned. But I should not care to open a book if I had no interest in the past. Pray indulge my curiosity to learn something about that old tower. It could not look more melancholy and solitary if I had built it myself."

"Its most melancholy associations are with a very recent past," answered Cecilia. "The tower, in remote times, formed the keep of a castle belonging to the most ancient and once the most powerful family in these parts. The owners were barons who took active share in the Wars of the Roses. The last of them sided with Richard III.,

and after the battle of Bosworth the title was attainted, and the larger portion of the lands were confiscated. Loyalty to a Plantagenet was of course treason to a Tudor. But the regeneration of the family rested with their direct descendants, who had saved from the general wreck of their fortunes what may be called a good squire's estate—about, perhaps, the same rental as my father's, but of much larger acreage. These squires, however, were more looked up to in the county than the wealthiest peer. They were still by far the oldest family in the county; and traced in their pedigree alliances with the most illustrious houses in English history. In themselves too, for many generations, they were a high-spirited, hospitable, popular race, living unostentatiously on their income, and contented with their rank of squires. The castle—ruined by time and siege—they did not attempt to restore. They dwelt in a house near to it, built about Elizabeth's time, which you could not see, for it lies in a hollow behind the tower—a

moderate-sized, picturesque, country gentleman's house. Our family intermarried with them. The portrait you saw was a daughter of their house. And very proud was any squire in the county of intermarriage with the Fletwodes."

"Fletwode—that was their name? I have a vague recollection of having heard the name connected with some disastrous—oh, but it can't be the same family—pray go on."

"I fear it is the same family. But I will finish the story as I have heard it. The property descended at last to one Bertram Fletwode, who, unfortunately, obtained the reputation of being a very clever man of business. There was some mining company in which, with other gentlemen in the county, he took great interest; invested largely in shares; became the head of the direction——"

"I see; and was, of course, ruined."

"No: worse than that, he became very rich; and, unhappily, became desirous of

being richer still. I have heard that there was a great mania for speculations just about that time. He embarked in these, and prospered, till at last he was induced to invest a large share of the fortune thus acquired in the partnership of a bank, which enjoyed a high character. Up to that time he had retained popularity and esteem in the county ; but the squires who shared in the adventures of the mining company, and knew little or nothing about other speculations in which his name did not appear, professed to be shocked at the idea of a Fletwode, of Fletwode, being ostensibly joined in partnership with a Jones, of Clapham, in a London bank."

"Slow folks, those country squires,—behind the progress of the age. Well?"

"I have heard that Bertram Fletwode was himself very reluctant to take this step, but was persuaded to do so by his son. This son, Alfred, was said to have still greater talents for business than the father, and had been not only associated with but consulted

by him in all the later speculations which had proved so fortunate. Mrs. Campion knew Alfred Fletwode very well. She describes him as handsome, with quick, eager eyes; showy and imposing in his talk; immensely ambitious—more ambitious than avaricious,—collecting money less for its own sake than for that which it could give—rank and power. According to her it was the dearest wish of his heart to claim the old barony, but not before there could go with the barony a fortune adequate to the lustre of a title so ancient, and equal to the wealth of modern peers with higher nominal rank.”

“A poor ambition at the best; of the two I should prefer that of a poet in a garret. But I am no judge. Thank heaven I have no ambition. Still, all ambition, all desire to rise, is interesting to him who is ignominiously contented if he does not fall. So the son had his way, and Fletwode joined company with Jones on the road to wealth and the peerage?—meanwhile, did the son

marry? if so, of course the daughter of a duke or a millionaire. Tuft-hunting, or money-making, at the risk of degradation and the workhouse. Progress of the age!"

"No," replied Cecilia, smiling at this outburst, but smiling sadly, "Fletwode did not marry the daughter of a duke or a millionaire; but still his wife belonged to a noble family—very poor, but very proud. Perhaps he married from motives of ambition, though not of gain. Her father was of much political influence that might perhaps assist his claim to the barony. The mother, a woman of the world; enjoying a high social position and nearly related to a connection of ours—Lady Glenalvon."

"Lady Glenalvon, the dearest of my lady friends! You are connected with her?"

"Yes; Lord Glenalvon was my mother's uncle. But I wish to finish my story before my father joins us. Alfred Fletwode did not marry till long after the partnership in the bank. His father, at his desire, had bought up the whole

business,— Mr Jones having died. The bank was carried on in the names of Fletwode and Son. But the father had become merely a nominal or what I believe is called a ‘sleeping’ partner. He had long ceased to reside in the county. The old house was not grand enough for him. He had purchased a palatial residence in one of the home counties; lived there in great splendour; was a munificent patron of science and art; and in spite of his earlier addiction to business-like speculations he appears to have been a singularly accomplished, high-bred gentleman. Some years before his son’s marriage, Mr Fletwode had been afflicted with partial paralysis, and his medical attendant enjoined rigid abstention from business. From that time he never interfered with his son’s management of the bank. He had an only daughter, much younger than Alfred. Lord Eagleton, my mother’s brother, was engaged to be married to her. The wedding-day was fixed—when the world was startled by the news that the

great firm of Fletwode and Son had stopped payment,—is that the right phrase?”

“I believe so.”

“A great many people were ruined in that failure. The public indignation was very great. Of course all the Fletwode property went to the creditors. Old Mr Fletwode was legally acquitted of all other offence than that of over-confidence in his son. Alfred was convicted of fraud—of forgery. I don’t, of course, know the particulars,—they are very complicated. He was sentenced to a long term of servitude, but died the day he was condemned—apparently by poison, which he had long secreted about his person. Now you can understand why my father, who is almost gratuitously sensitive on the point of honour, removed into a dark corner the portrait of Arabella Fletwode,—his own ancestress, but also the ancestress of a convicted felon,—you can understand why the whole subject is so painful to him. His wife’s brother was to have married the felon’s sister; and

though, of course, that marriage was tacitly broken off by the terrible disgrace that had befallen the Fletwodes, yet I don't think my poor uncle ever recovered the blow to his hopes. He went abroad, and died in Madeira, of a slow decline."

"And the felon's sister, did she die too?"

"No; not that I know of. Mrs Campion says that she saw in a newspaper the announcement of old Mr Fletwode's death, and a paragraph to the effect that after that event Miss Fletwode had sailed from Liverpool for New York."

"Alfred Fletwode's wife went back, of course, to her family?"

"Alas! no,—poor thing! She had not been many months married when the bank broke; and among his friends her wretched husband appears to have forged the names of the trustees to her marriage settlement, and sold out the sums which would otherwise have served her as competence. Her father, too, was a great sufferer by the bankruptcy, having by his son-in-law's advice placed a

considerable portion of his moderate fortune in Alfred's hands for investment, all of which was involved in the general wreck. I am afraid he was a very hard-hearted man; at all events his poor daughter never returned to him. She died, I think, even before the death of Bertram Fletwode. The whole story is very dismal."

"Dismal indeed, but pregnant with salutary warnings to those who live in an age of progress. Here you see a family of fair fortune, living hospitably, beloved, revered, more looked up to by their neighbours than the wealthiest nobles—no family not proud to boast alliance with it. All at once, in the tranquil record of this happy race, appears that darling of the age, that hero of progress—a clever man of business. He be contented to live as his fathers! He be contented with such trifles as competence, respect, and love! Much too clever for that. The age is money-making—go with the age! He goes with the age. Born a gentleman only, he exalts himself into a trader. But at least he, it

seems, if greedy, was not dishonest. He was born a gentleman, but his son was born a trader. The son is a still cleverer man of business; the son is consulted and trusted. Aha! He too goes with the age; to greed he links ambition. The trader's son wishes to return—what? to the rank of gentleman?—gentleman! nonsense! everybody is a gentleman nowadays—to the title of Lord. How ends it all? Could I sit but for twelve hours in the innermost heart of that Alfred Fletwode—could I see how, step by step from his childhood, the dishonest son was avariciously led on by the honest father to depart from the old *vestigia* of Fletwodes of Fletwode—scorning The Enough to covet The More—gaining The More to sigh it is not The Enough—I think I might show that the age lives in a house of glass, and had better not for its own sake throw stones on the felon!”

“Ah, but, Mr Chillingly, surely this is a very rare exception in the general——”

“Rare!” interrupted Kenelm, who was

excited to a warmth of passion which would have startled his most intimate friend—if indeed an intimate friend had ever been vouchsafed to him—“rare! nay, how common—I don’t say to the extent of forgery and fraud, but to the extent of degradation and ruin—is the greed of a Little More to those who have The Enough; is the discontent with competence, respect, and love, when catching sight of a money-bag! How many well-descended county families, cursed with an heir who is called a clever man of business, have vanished from the soil. A company starts—the clever man joins it—one bright day. Pouf! the old estates and the old name are powder. Ascend higher. Take nobles whose ancestral titles ought to be to English ears like the sound of clarions, awakening the most slothful to the scorn of money-bags and the passion for renown. Lo! in that mocking dance of death called the Progress of the Age, one who did not find Enough in a sovereign’s revenue, and seeks The Little More as a gambler on the turf by

the advice of blacklegs! Lo! another, with lands wider than his greatest ancestors ever possessed, must still go in for The Little More, adding acre to acre, heaping debt upon debt! Lo! a third, whose name, borne by his ancestors, was once the terror of England's foes—the landlord of a hotel! A fourth—but why go on through the list? Another and another still succeeds—each on the Road to Ruin, each in the Age of Progress. Ah, Miss Travers! in the old time it was through the Temple of Honour that one passed to the Temple of Fortune. In this wise age the process is reversed. But here comes your father.”

“A thousand pardons!” said Leopold Travers. “That numskull Mondell kept me so long with his old-fashioned Tory doubts whether liberal politics are favourable to agricultural prospects. But as he owes a round sum to a Whig lawyer I had to talk with his wife, a prudent woman; convinced her that his own agricultural prospects were safest on the Whig side of the question; and

after kissing his baby and shaking his hand, booked his vote for George Belvoir—a plumper.”

“I suppose,” said Kenelm to himself, and with that candour which characterised him whenever he talked to himself, “that Travers has taken the right road to the Temple, not of Honour, but of honours, in every country, ancient or modern, which has adopted the system of popular suffrage.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day Mrs Campion and Cecilia were seated under the verandah. They were both ostensibly employed on two several pieces of embroidery, one intended for a screen, the other for a sofa-cushion. But the mind of neither was on her work.

MRS CAMPION.—“Has Mr Chillingly said when he means to take leave?”

CECILIA.—“Not to me. How much my dear father enjoys his conversation!”

MRS CAMPION.—“Cynicism and mockery were not so much the fashion among young men in your father’s day as I suppose they are now, and therefore they seem new to Mr Travers. To me they are not new, because I saw more of the old than the young when I lived in London, and cynicism and

mockery are more natural to men who are leaving the world than to those who are entering it."

CECILIA.—"Dear Mrs Campion, how bitter you are, and how unjust! You take much too literally the jesting way in which Mr Chillingly expresses himself. There can be no cynicism in one who goes out of his way to make others happy."

MRS CAMPION.—"You mean in the whim of making an ill-assorted marriage between a pretty village flirt and a sickly cripple, and settling a couple of peasants in a business for which they are wholly unfitted."

CECILIA.—"Jessie Wiles is not a flirt, and I am convinced that she will make Will Somers a very good wife, and that the shop will be a great success."

MRS CAMPION.—"We shall see. Still, if Mr Chillingly's talk belies his actions, he may be a good man, but he is a very affected one."

CECILIA.—"Have I not heard you say that there are persons so natural that they

seem affected to those who do not understand them ? ”

Mrs Campion raised her eyes to Cecilia’s face, dropped them again over her work, and said, in grave undertones—

“Take care, Cecilia.”

“Take care of what ? ”

“My dearest child, forgive me ; but I do not like the warmth with which you defend Mr Chillingly.”

“Would not my father defend him still more warmly if he had heard you ? ”

“Men judge of men in their relations to men. I am a woman, and judge of men in their relations to women. I should tremble for the happiness of any woman who joined her fate with that of Kenelm Chillingly.”

“My dear friend, I do not understand you to-day.”

“Nay ; I did not mean to be so solemn, my love. After all, it is nothing to us whom Mr Chillingly may or may not marry. He is but a passing visitor, and, once gone, the

chances are that we may not see him again for years."

Thus speaking, Mrs Campion again raised her eyes from her work, stealing a side-long glance at Cecilia; and her mother-like heart sank within her, on noticing how suddenly pale the girl had become, and how her lips quivered. Mrs Campion had enough knowledge of life to feel aware that she had committed a grievous blunder. In that earliest stage of virgin affection, when a girl is unconscious of more than a certain vague interest in one man which distinguishes him from others in her thoughts,—if she hears him unjustly disparaged, if some warning against him is implied, if the probability that he will never be more to her than a passing acquaintance is forcibly obtruded on her,—suddenly that vague interest, which might otherwise have faded away with many another girlish fancy, becomes arrested, consolidated; the quick pang it occasions makes her involuntarily, and for the first time, question herself, and ask, "Do I love?"

But when a girl of a nature so delicate as that of Cecilia Travers can ask herself the question, "Do I love?" her very modesty, her very shrinking from acknowledging that any power over her thoughts for weal or for woe can be acquired by a man, except through the sanction of that love which only becomes divine in her eyes when it is earnest and pure and self-devoted, makes her prematurely disposed to answer "yes." And when a girl of such a nature in her own heart answers "yes" to such a question, even if she deceive herself at the moment, she begins to cherish the deceit till the belief in her love becomes a reality. She has adopted a religion, false or true, and she would despise herself if she could be easily converted.

Mrs. Campion had so contrived that she had forced that question upon Cecilia, and she feared, by the girl's change of countenance, that the girl's heart had answered "yes."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE the conversation just narrated took place, Kenelm had walked forth to pay a visit to Will Somers. All obstacles to Will's marriage were now cleared away ; the transfer of lease for the shop had been signed, and the banns were to be published for the first time on the following Sunday. We need not say that Will was very happy. Kenelm then paid a visit to Mrs Bowles, with whom he stayed an hour. On re-entering the Park, he saw Travers, walking slowly, with downcast eyes, and his hands clasped behind him (his habit when in thought). He did not observe Kenelm's approach till within a few feet of him, and he then greeted his guest in listless accents, unlike his usual cheerful tones.

"I have been visiting the man you have made so happy," said Kenelm.

"Who can that be?"

"Will Somers. Do you make so many people happy that your reminiscence of them is lost in their number?"

Travers smiled faintly, and shook his head.

Kenelm went on. "I have also seen Mrs Bowles, and you will be pleased to hear that Tom is satisfied with his change of abode; there is no chance of his returning to Graveleigh; and Mrs Bowles took very kindly to my suggestion that the little property you wish for should be sold to you, and, in that case, she would remove to Luscombe to be near her son."

"I thank you much for your thought of me," said Travers, "and the affair shall be seen to at once, though the purchase is no longer important to me. I ought to have told you three days ago, but it slipped my memory, that a neighbouring squire, a young fellow just come into his property, has offered

to exchange a capital farm, much nearer to my residence, for the lands I hold in Graveleigh, including Saunderson's farm and the cottages: they are quite at the outskirts of my estate, but run into his, and the exchange will be advantageous to both. Still I am glad that the neighbourhood should be thoroughly rid of a brute like Tom Bowles."

"You would not call him brute if you knew him; but I am sorry to hear that Will Somers will be under another landlord."

"It does not matter, since his tenure is secured for fourteen years."

"What sort of man is the new landlord?"

"I don't know much of him. He was in the army till his father died, and has only just made his appearance in the county. He has, however, already earned the character of being too fond of the other sex, and it is well that pretty Jessie is to be safely married."

Travers then relapsed into a moody silence

from which Kenelm found it difficult to rouse him. At length the latter said, kindly—

“My dear Mr Travers, do not think I take a liberty if I venture to guess that something has happened this morning which troubles or vexes you. When that is the case, it is often a relief to say what it is, even to a confidant so unable to advise or to comfort as myself.”

“You are a good fellow, Chillingly, and I know not, at least in these parts, a man to whom I would unburthen myself more freely. I am put out, I confess ; disappointed unreasonably, in a cherished wish, and,” he added, with a slight laugh, “it always annoys me when I don’t have my own way.”

“So it does me.”

“Don’t you think that George Belvoir is a very fine young man ?”

“Certainly.”

“I call him handsome ; he is steadier, too, than most men of his age, and of his command of money ; and yet he does not want

spirit nor knowledge of life. To every advantage of rank and fortune he adds the industry and the ambition which attain distinction in public life."

"Quite true. Is he going to withdraw from the election after all?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then how does he not let you have your own way?"

"It is not he," said Travers, peevishly; "it is Cecilia. Don't you understand that George is precisely the husband I would choose for her; and this morning came a very well written manly letter from him, asking my permission to pay his addresses to her."

"But that is your own way so far."

"Yes, and here comes the balk. Of course I had to refer it to Cecilia, and she positively declines, and has no reasons to give; does not deny that George is good-looking and sensible, that he is a man of whose preference any girl might be proud; but she chooses to say she cannot love him,

and when I ask why she cannot love him, has no other answer than that 'she cannot say.' It is too provoking."

"It is provoking," answered Kenelm; "but then Love is the most dunderheaded of all the passions; it never will listen to reason. The very rudiments of logic are unknown to it. 'Love has no wherefore,' says one of those Latin poets who wrote love-verses called elegies—a name which we moderns appropriate to funeral dirges. For my own part, I can't understand how any one can be expected voluntarily to make up his mind to go out of his mind. And if Miss Travers cannot go out of her mind because George Belvoir does, you could not argue her into doing so if you talked till doomsday."

Travers smiled in spite of himself, but he answered gravely,—“Certainly, I would not wish Cissy to marry any man she disliked, but she does not dislike George—no girl could; and where that is the case, a girl so sensible, so affectionate, so well brought up,

is sure to love, after marriage, a thoroughly kind and estimable man, especially when she has no previous attachment—which, of course, Cissy never had. In fact, though I do not wish to force my daughter's will, I am not yet disposed to give up my own. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"I am the more inclined to a marriage so desirable in every way, because when Cissy comes out in London—which she has not yet done—she is sure to collect around her face and her presumptive inheritance all the handsome fortune-hunters and titled *vauriens*; and if in love there is no wherefore, how can I be sure that she may not fall in love with a scamp?"

"I think you may be sure of that," said Kenelm. "Miss Travers has too much mind."

"Yes, at present; but did you not say that in love people go out of their mind?"

"True! I forgot that."

"I am not then disposed to dismiss poor

George's offer with a decided negative, and yet it would be unfair to mislead him by encouragement. In fact, I'll be hanged if I know how to reply."

"You think Miss Travers does not dislike George Belvoir, and if she saw more of him may like him better, and it would be good for her as well as for him not to put an end to that chance?"

"Exactly so."

"Why not then write: 'My dear George;— You have my best wishes, but my daughter does not seem disposed to marry at present. Let me consider your letter not written, and continue on the same terms as we were before.' Perhaps, as George knows Virgil, you might find your own schoolboy recollections of that poet useful here, and add, '*Varium et mutabile semper femina*;'—hackneyed, but true."

"My dear Chillingly, your suggestion is capital. How the deuce at your age have you contrived to know the world so well?"

Kenelm answered in the pathetic tones

so natural to his voice, "By being only a looker-on ;—alas !"

Leopold Travers felt much relieved after he had written his reply to George. He had not been quite so ingenuous in his revelation to Chillingly as he may have seemed. Conscious, like all proud and fond fathers, of his daughter's attractions, he was not without some apprehension that Kenelm himself might entertain an ambition at variance with that of George Belvoir : if so, he deemed it well to put an end to such ambition while yet in time—partly because his interest was already pledged to George ; partly because, in rank and fortune, George was the better match ; partly because George was of the same political party as himself—while Sir Peter, and probably Sir Peter's heir, espoused the opposite side ; and partly also because, with all his personal liking to Kenelm, Leopold Travers, as a very sensible, practical man of the world, was not sure that a baronet's heir who tramped the country on foot in the dress of a petty farmer, and

indulged pugilistic propensities in martial encounters with stalwart farriers, was likely to make a safe husband and a comfortable son-in-law. Kenelm's words, and still more his manner, convinced Travers that any apprehensions of rivalry that he had previously conceived, were utterly groundless.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE same evening, after dinner (during that lovely summer month they dined at Neesdale Park at an unfashionably early hour), Kenelm, in company with Travers and Cecilia, ascended a gentle eminence at the back of the gardens, on which there were some picturesque ivy-grown ruins of an ancient priory, and commanding the best view of a glorious sunset and a subject landscape of vale and wood, rivulet and distant hills.

“Is the delight in scenery,” said Kenelm, “really an acquired gift, as some philosophers tell us? is it true that young children and rude savages do not feel it—that the eye must be educated to comprehend its charm,

and that the eye can be only educated through the mind?"

"I should think your philosophers are right," said Travers. "When I was a school-boy, I thought no scenery was like the flat of a cricket-ground; when I hunted at Melton, I thought that unpicturesque country more beautiful than Devonshire. It is only of late years that I feel a sensible pleasure in scenery for its own sake, apart from associations of custom or the uses to which we apply them."

"And what say you, Miss Travers?"

"I scarcely know what to say," answered Cecilia, musingly. "I can remember no time in my childhood when I did not feel delight in that which seemed to me beautiful in scenery, but I suspect that I very vaguely distinguished one kind of beauty from another. A common field with daisies and buttercups was beautiful to me then, and I doubt if I saw anything more beautiful in extensive landscapes." •

"True," said Kenelm: "it is not in early childhood that we carry the sight into distance: as is the mind so is the eye; in early childhood the mind revels in the present, and the eye rejoices most in the things nearest to it. I don't think in childhood that we

" 'Watched with wistful eyes the setting sun.' "

"Ah! what a world of thought in that word '*wistful*'!" murmured Cecilia, as her gaze riveted itself on the western heavens, towards which Kenelm had pointed as he spoke, where the enlarging orb rested half its disc on the rim of the horizon.

She had seated herself on a fragment of the ruin, backed by the hollows of a broken arch. The last rays of the sun lingered on her young face, and then lost themselves in the gloom of the arch behind. There was a silence for some minutes, during which the sun had sunk. Rosy clouds in thin flakes still floated, momentarily waning; and the eve-

star stole forth steadfast, bright, and lonely—nay, lonely not now ;—that sentinel has aroused a host.

Said a voice, “No sign of rain yet, Squire. What will become of the turnips?”

“Real life again! Who can escape it?” muttered Kenelm, as his eyes rested on the burly figure of the Squire’s bailiff.

“Ha! North,” said Travers, “what brings you here? No bad news, I hope.”

“Indeed, yes, Squire. The Durham bull —”

“The Durham bull! What of him? You frighten me.”

“Taken bad. Colic.”

“Excuse me, Chillingly,” cried Travers; “I must be off. A most valuable animal, and no one I can trust to doctor him but myself.”

“That’s true enough,” said the bailiff, admiringly. “There’s not a veterinary in the county like the Squire.”

Travers was already gone, and the panting bailiff had hard work to catch him up.

Kenelm seated himself beside Cecilia on the ruined fragment.

"How I envy your father!" said he.

"Why just at this moment? Because he knows how to doctor the bull?" said Cecilia, with a sweet low laugh.

"Well, that is something to envy. It is a pleasure to relieve from pain any of God's creatures—even a Durham bull."

"Indeed, yes. I am justly rebuked."

"On the contrary, you are to be justly praised. Your question suggested to me an amiable sentiment in place of the selfish one which was uppermost in my thoughts. I envied your father because he creates for himself so many objects of interest; because while he can appreciate the mere sensuous enjoyment of a landscape and a sunset, he can find mental excitement in turnip crops and bulls. Happy, Miss Travers, is the Practical Man."

"When my dear father was as young as you, Mr Chillingly, I am sure that he had no more interest in turnips and bulls than you

have. I do not doubt that some day you will be as practical as he is in that respect."

"Do you think so—sincerely?"

Cecilia made no answer.

Kenelm repeated the question.

"Sincerely, then, I do not know whether you will take interest in precisely the same things that interest my father; but there are other things than turnips and cattle which belong to what you call 'practical life,' and in these you will take interest, as you took it in the fortunes of Will Somers and Jessie Wiles."

"That was no practical interest. I got nothing by it. But even if that interest were practical—I mean productive, as cattle and turnip crops are—a succession of Somerses and Wileses is not to be hoped for. History never repeats itself."

"May I answer you, though very humbly?"

"Miss Travers, the wisest man that ever existed never was wise enough to know woman; but I think most men ordinarily

wise will agree in this, that woman is by no means a humble creature, and that when she says she 'answers very humbly,' she does not mean what she says. Permit me to entreat you to answer very loftily."

Cecilia laughed and blushed. The laugh was musical; the blush was—what? Let any man, seated beside a girl like Cecilia at starry twilight, find the right epithet for that blush. I pass it by epithetless. But she answered, firmly though sweetly—

"Are there not things very practical, and affecting the happiness, not of one or two individuals, but of innumerable thousands, in which a man like Mr Chillingly cannot fail to feel interest, long before he is my father's age?"

"Forgive me; you do not answer—you question. I imitate you, and ask what are those things as applicable to a man like Mr Chillingly?"

Cecilia gathered herself up, as with the desire to express a great deal in short substance, and then said—

“In the expression of thought, literature ; in the conduct of action, politics.”

Kenelm Chillingly stared, dumfounded. I suppose the greatest enthusiast for Woman's Rights could not assert more reverentially than he did the cleverness of women ; but among the things which the cleverness of women did not achieve, he had always placed “laconics.” “No woman,” he was wont to say, “ever invented an axiom or a proverb.”

“Miss Travers,” he said at last, “before we proceed farther, vouchsafe to tell me if that very terse reply of yours is spontaneous and original ; or whether you have not borrowed it from some book which I have not chanced to read ?”

Cecilia pondered honestly, and then said, “I don't think it is from any book ; but I owe so many of my thoughts to Mrs Campion, and she lived so much among clever men, that——”

“I see it all, and accept your definition, no matter whence it came. You think I might become an author or a politician.

Did you ever read an essay by a living author called 'Motive Power'?"

"No."

"That essay is designed to intimate that without motive power a man, whatever his talents or his culture, does nothing practical. The mainsprings of motive power are Want and Ambition. They are absent from my mechanism. By the accident of birth I do not require bread and cheese; by the accident of temperament and of philosophical culture I care nothing about praise or blame. But without want of bread and cheese, and with a most stolid indifference to praise and blame, do you honestly think that a man will do anything practical in literature or politics? Ask Mrs Campion."

"I will not ask her. Is the sense of duty nothing?"

"Alas! we interpret duty so variously. Of mere duty, as we commonly understand the word, I do not think I shall fail more than other men. But for the fair development of all the good that is in us, do you

believe that we should adopt some line of conduct against which our whole heart rebels? Can you say to the clerk, 'Be a poet'? Can you say to the poet, 'Be a clerk'? It is no more to the happiness of a man's being to order him to take to one career when his whole heart is set on another, than it is to order him to marry one woman when it is to another woman that his heart will turn."

Cecilia here winced and looked away. Kenelm had more tact than most men of his age—that is, a keener perception of subjects to avoid; but then Kenelm had a wretched habit of forgetting the person he talked to and talking to himself. Utterly oblivious of George Belvoir, he was talking to himself now. Not then observing the effect his *mal-à-propos* dogma had produced on his listener, he went on—"Happiness is a word very lightly used. It may mean little—it may mean much. By the word happiness I would signify, not the momentary joy of a child who gets a

plaything, but the lasting harmony between our inclinations and our objects ; and without that harmony we are a discord to ourselves, we are incompletions, we are failures. Yet there are plenty of advisers who say to us, 'It is a duty to be a discord.' I deny it."

Here Cecilia rose and said in a low voice, "It is getting late. We must go homeward."

They descended the green eminence slowly, and at first in silence. The bats, emerging from the ivied ruins they left behind, flitted and skimmed before them, chasing the insects of the night. A moth, escaping from its pursuer, alighted on Cecilia's breast, as if for refuge.

"The bats are practical," said Kenelm : "they are hungry, and their motive power to-night is strong. Their interest is in the insects they chase. They have no interest in the stars ; but the stars lure the moth."

Cecilia drew her slight scarf over the moth, so that it might not fly off and become a

prey to the bats. "Yet," said she, "the moth is practical too."

"Ay, just now, since it has found an asylum from the danger that threatened it in its course towards the stars."

Cecilia felt the beating of her heart, upon which lay the moth concealed. Did she think that a deeper and more tender meaning than they outwardly expressed was couched in these words? If so, she erred. They now neared the garden gate, and Kenelm paused as he opened it. "See," he said, "the moon has just risen over those dark firs, making the still night stiller. Is it not strange that we mortals, placed amid perpetual agitation and tumult and strife, as if our natural element, conceive a sense of holliness in the images antagonistic to our real life—I mean in images of repose? I feel at the moment as if I suddenly were made better, now that heaven and earth have suddenly become yet more tranquil. I am now conscious of a purer and sweeter moral than either I or you drew from the insect

you have sheltered. I must come to the poets to express it—

‘The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow ;
*The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.*

Oh, that something afar! that something afar! never to be reached on this earth—never, never!”

There was such a wail in that cry from the man’s heart that Cecilia could not resist the impulse of a divine compassion. She laid her hand on his, and looked on the dark mildness of his upward face with eyes that heaven meant to be wells of comfort to grieving man. At the light touch of that hand Kenelm started, looked down, and met those soothing eyes.

“I am happy to tell you that I have saved my Durham,” cried out Mr Travers from the other side of the gate.

CHAPTER XX.

As Kenelm that night retired to his own room, he paused on the landing-place opposite to the portrait which Mr Travers had consigned to that desolate exile. This daughter of a race dishonoured in its extinction might well have been the glory of the house she had entered as a bride. The countenance was singularly beautiful, and of a character of beauty eminently patrician ; there was in its expression a gentleness and modesty not often found in the female portraits of Sir Peter Lely ; and in the eyes and in the smile a wonderful aspect of innocent happiness.

“What a speaking homily,” soliloquised Kenelm, addressing the picture, “against the ambition thy fair descendant would awake in me, art thou, O lovely image ! For genera-

tions thy beauty lived in this canvas, a thing of joy, the pride of the race it adorned. Owner after owner said to admiring guests, 'Yes, a fine portrait, by Lely; she was my ancestress—a Fletwode of Fletwode.' Now, lest guests should remember that a Fletwode married a Travers, thou art thrust out of sight; not even Lely's art can make thee of value, can redeem thine innocent self from disgrace. And the last of the Fletwodes, doubtless the most ambitious of all—the most bent on restoring and regilding the old lordly name—dies a felon; the infamy of one living man so large that it can blot out the honour of the dead." He turned his eyes from the smile of the portrait, entered his own room, and, seating himself by the writing-table, drew blotting-book and note-paper towards him, took up the pen, and instead of writing fell into deep reverie. There was a slight frown on his brow, on which frowns were rare. He was very angry with himself.

"Kenelm" he said, entering into his cus-

tomary dialogue with that self, "it becomes you, forsooth, to moralise about the honour of races which have no affinity with you. Son of Sir Peter Chillingly, look at home. Are you quite sure that you have not said or done or looked a something that may bring trouble to the hearth on which you are received as guest? What right had you to be moaning forth your egotisms, not remembering that your words fell on compassionate ears, and that such words, heard at moonlight by a girl whose heart they move to pity, may have dangers for her peace. Shame on you, Kenelm! shame! knowing too what her father's wish is; and knowing too that you have not the excuse of desiring to win that fair creature for yourself. What do you mean, Kenelm? I don't hear you; speak out. Oh, 'that I am a vain coxcomb to fancy that she could take a fancy to me'—well, perhaps I am; I hope so earnestly; and, at all events, there has been and shall be no time for much mischief. We are off to-morrow, Kenelm; bestir yourself and

pack up, write your letters, and then 'put out the light—put out *the* light!'"

But this converser with himself did not immediately set to work, as agreed upon by that twofold one. He rose and walked restlessly to and fro the floor, stopping ever and anon to look at the pictures on the walls.

Several of the worst painted of the family portraits had been consigned to the room tenanted by Kenelm, which, though both the oldest and largest bed-chamber in the house, was always appropriated to a bachelor male guest, partly because it was without dressing-room, remote, and only approached by the small back staircase, to the landing-place of which Arabella had been banished in disgrace; and partly because it had the reputation of being haunted, and ladies are more alarmed by that superstition than men are supposed to be. The portraits on which Kenelm now paused to gaze were of various dates, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George III., none of them by eminent artists,

and none of them the effigies of ancestors who had left names in history—in short, such portraits as are often seen in the country houses of well-born squires. One family type of feature or expression pervaded most of these portraits—features clear-cut and hardy, expression open and honest. And though not one of those dead men had been famous, each of them had contributed his unostentatious share, in his own simple way, to the movements of his time. That worthy in ruff and corselet had manned his own ship at his own cost against the Armada; never had been repaid by the thrifty Burleigh the expenses which had harassed him and diminished his patrimony; never had been even knighted. That gentleman with short straight hair, which overhung his forehead, leaning on his sword with one hand, and a book open in the other hand, had served as representative of his county town in the Long Parliament, fought under Cromwell at Marston Moor, and resisting the Protector when he removed the ‘bauble,’ was one of

the patriots incarcerated in "Hell hole." He, too, had diminished his patrimony, maintaining two troopers and two horses at his own charge; and "Hell hole" was all he got in return. A third, with a sleeker expression of countenance, and a large wig, flourishing in the quiet times of Charles II., had only been a justice of the peace, but his alert look showed that he had been a very active one. He had neither increased nor diminished his ancestral fortune. A fourth, in the costume of William III.'s reign, had somewhat added to the patrimony by becoming a lawyer. He must have been a successful one. He is inscribed "Serjeant at law." A fifth, a lieutenant in the army, was killed at Blenheim; his portrait was that of a very young and handsome man, taken the year before his death. His wife's portrait is placed in the drawing-room because it was painted by Kneller. She was handsome too, and married again a nobleman, whose portrait, of course, was not in the family collection. Here there was a gap in chrono-

logical arrangement, the lieutenant's heir being an infant ; but in the time of George II. another Travers appeared as the governor of a West India colony. His son took part in a very different movement of the age. He is represented old, venerable, with white hair, and underneath his effigy is inscribed, "Follower of Wesley." His successor completes the collection. He is in naval uniform ; he is in full length, and one of his legs is a wooden one. He is Captain, R.N., and inscribed, "Fought under Nelson at Trafalgar." That portrait would have found more dignified place in the reception-rooms if the face had not been forbiddingly ugly, and the picture itself a villanous daub.

"I see," said Kenelm, stopping short, "why Cecilia Travers has been reared to talk of duty as a practical interest in life. These men of a former time seem to have lived to discharge a duty and not to follow the progress of the age in the chase of a money-bag—except perhaps one, but then to be sure he was a lawyer. Kenelm, rouse up

and listen to me ; whatever we are, whether active or indolent, is not my favourite maxim a just and a true one—viz., ‘A good man does good by living’? But, for that, he must be a harmony and not a discord. Kenelm, you lazy dog, we must pack up.”

Kenelm then refilled his portmanteau, and labelled and directed it to Exmundham, after which he wrote these three notes :—

Note 1.

TO THE MARCHIONESS OF GLENALVON.

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND MONITRESS,—I have left your last letter a month unanswered. I could not reply to your congratulations on the event of my attaining the age of twenty-one. That event is a conventional sham, and you know how I abhor shams and conventions. The truth is, that I am either much younger than twenty-one or much older. As to all designs on my peace in standing for our county at the next election, I wished to defeat them, and I have done so ; and now I

have commenced a course of travel. I had intended on starting to confine it to my native country. Intentions are mutable. I am going abroad. You shall hear of my whereabouts. I write this from the house of Leopold Travers, who, I understand from his fair daughter, is a connection of yours ;—a man to be highly esteemed and cordially liked.

“No, in spite of all your flattering predictions, I shall never be anything in this life more distinguished than what I am now. Lady Glenalvon allows me to sign myself her grateful friend,

K. C.”

Note 2.

“DEAR COUSIN MIVERS,—I am going abroad. I may want money ; for, in order to rouse motive power within me, I mean to want money if I can. When I was a boy of sixteen you offered me money to write attacks upon veteran authors for ‘The Londoner.’ Will you give me money now for a similar display of that grand New Idea of our generation, that the less a man knows of a

subject the better he understands it? I am about to travel into countries which I have never seen, and among races I have never known. My arbitrary judgments on both will be invaluable to 'The Londoner' from a Special Correspondent who shares your respect for the anonymous, and whose name is never to be divulged. Direct your answer by return to me, *poste restante*, Calais.—
Yours truly, K. C."

Note 3.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I found your letter here, whence I depart to-morrow. Excuse haste. I go abroad, and shall write to you from Calais.

"I admire Leopold Travers very much. After all, how much of self-balance there is in a true English gentleman! Toss him up and down where you will, and he always alights on his feet—a gentleman. He has one child, a daughter named Cecilia—handsome enough to allure into wedlock any mortal whom Decimus Roach had not convinced

that in celibacy lay the right 'Approach to the Angels.' Moreover, she is a girl whom one can talk with. Even you could talk with her. Travers wishes her to marry a very respectable, good-looking, promising gentleman, in every way 'suitable,' as they say. And if she does, she will rival that pink and perfection of polished womanhood, Lady Glenalvon. I send you back my portmanteau. I have pretty well exhausted my experience-money, but have not yet encroached on my monthly allowance. I mean still to live upon that, eking it out, if necessary, by the sweat of my brow—or brains. But if any case requiring extra funds should occur—a case in which that extra would do such real good to another that I feel *you* would do it—why, I must draw a cheque on your bankers. But understand that is your expense, not mine, and it is *you* who are to be repaid in heaven. Dear father, how I do love and honour you every day more and more! Promise you not to propose to any young lady till I come first to you for con-

sent !—oh, my dear father, how could you doubt it? how doubt that I could not be happy with any wife whom you could not love as a daughter? Accept that promise as sacred. But I wish you had asked me something in which obedience was not much too facile to be a test of duty. I could not have obeyed you more cheerfully if you had asked me to promise never to propose to any young lady at all. Had you asked me to promise that I would renounce the dignity of reason for the frenzy of love, or the freedom of man for the servitude of husband, then I might have sought to achieve the impossible; but I should have died in the effort!—and thou wouldst have known that remorse which haunts the bed of the tyrant.—Your affectionate son,

K. C."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next morning Kenelm surprised the party at breakfast by appearing in the coarse habiliments in which he had first made his host's acquaintance. He did not glance towards Cecilia when he announced his departure; but, his eye resting on Mrs. Campion, he smiled, perhaps a little sadly, at seeing her countenance brighten up and hearing her give a short sigh of relief. Travers tried hard to induce him to stay a few days longer, but Kenelm was firm. "The summer is wearing away," said he, "and I have far to go before the flowers fade and the snows fall. On the third night from this I shall sleep on foreign soil."

"You are going abroad, then?" asked Mrs Campion.

"Yes."

"A sudden resolution, Mr Chillingly. The other day you talked of visiting the Scotch lakes."

"True; but, on reflection, they will be crowded with holiday tourists, many of whom I shall probably know. Abroad I shall be free, for I shall be unknown."

"I suppose you will be back for the hunting season," said Travers.

"I think not. I do not hunt foxes."

"Probably we shall at all events meet in London," said Travers. "I think, after long rustication, that a season or two in the bustling capital may be a salutary change for mind as well as for body; and it is time that Cecilia were presented and her court-dress specially commemorated in the columns of the 'Morning Post.'"

Cecilia was seemingly too busied behind the tea-urn to heed this reference to her *début*.

"I shall miss you terribly," cried Travers, a few moments afterwards, and with a hearty emphasis. "I declare that you have quite unsettled me. Your quaint sayings will be ringing in my ears long after you are gone."

There was a rustle as of a woman's dress in sudden change of movement behind the tea-urn.

"Cissy," said Mrs. Campion, "are we ever to have our tea?"

"I beg pardon," answered a voice behind the urn. "I hear Pompey" (the Skye terrier) "whining on the lawn. They have shut him out. I will be back presently."

Cecilia rose and was gone. Mrs. Campion took her place at the tea-urn.

"It is quite absurd in Cissy to be so fond of that hideous dog," said Travers, petulantly.

"Its hideousness is its beauty," returned Mrs. Campion, laughing. "Mr. Belvoir selected it for her as having the longest

back and the shortest legs of any dog he could find in Scotland."

"Ah, George gave it to her; I forgot that," said Travers, laughing pleasantly.

It was some minutes before Miss Travers returned with the Skye terrier, and she seemed to have recovered her spirits in regaining that ornamental accession to the party—talking very quickly and gaily, and with flushed cheeks, like a young person excited by her own overflow of mirth.

But when, half an hour afterwards, Kenelm took leave of her and Mrs Campion at the hall-door, the flush was gone, her lips were tightly compressed, and her parting words were not audible. Then as his figure (side by side with her father, who accompanied his guest to the lodge) swiftly passed across the lawn and vanished amid the trees beyond, Mrs Campion wound a mother-like arm around her waist and kissed her. Cecilia shivered and turned her face to her friend smiling; but such

a smile,—one of those smiles that seem brimful of tears.

“Thank you, dear,” she said, meekly; and gliding away towards the flower-garden, lingered a while by the gate which Kenelm had opened the night before. Then she went with languid steps up the green slopes towards the ruined priory.

BOOK IV.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER I.

It is somewhat more than a year and a half since Kenelm Chillingly left England, and the scene now is in London, during that earlier and more sociable season which precedes the Easter holidays—season in which the charm of intellectual companionship is not yet withered away in the heated atmosphere of crowded rooms—season in which parties are small, and conversation extends beyond the interchange of commonplace with one's next neighbour at a dinner-table—season in which you have a fair chance of finding your warmest friends not absorbed by the superior claims of their chilliest acquaintances.

There was what is called a *conversazione* at the house of one of those Whig noblemen

by which certain veterans were to retire, and certain younger men to be admitted into the Administration. It was an amiable feature in his character that he had a sympathy with the young, and had helped to bring into Parliament, as well as into office, some of the ablest of a generation later than his own. He gave them sensible counsel, was pleased when they succeeded, and encouraged them when they failed—always provided that they had stuff enough in them to redeem the failure ; if not, he gently dropped them from his intimacy, but maintained sufficiently familiar terms with them to be pretty sure that he could influence their votes, whenever he so desired.

The gentleman with whom he was now conversing was young, about five-and-twenty—not yet in Parliament, but with an intense desire to obtain a seat in it, and with one of those reputations which a youth carries away from school and college, justified, not by honours purely academical, but by an impression of ability and power

created on the minds of his contemporaries, and endorsed by his elders. He had done little at the university beyond taking a fair degree—except acquiring at the Debating Society the fame of an exceedingly ready and adroit speaker. On quitting college he had written one or two political articles in a quarterly review which created a sensation ; and though belonging to no profession, and having but a small yet independent income, society was very civil to him, as to a man who would some day or other attain a position in which he could damage his enemies and serve his friends. Something in this young man's countenance and bearing tended to favour the credit given to his ability and his promise. In his countenance there was no beauty ; in his bearing no elegance. But in that countenance there was vigour—there was energy—there was audacity. A forehead wide but low, protuberant in those organs over the brow which indicate the qualities fitted for perception and judgment—qualities for everyday life ; eyes

of the clear English blue, small, somewhat sunken, vigilant, sagacious, penetrating ; a long straight upper lip, significant of resolute purpose ; a mouth in which a student of physiognomy would have detected a dangerous charm. The smile was captivating, but it was artificial, surrounded by dimples, and displaying teeth white, small, strong, but divided from each other. The expression of that smile would have been frank and candid to all who failed to notice that it was not in harmony with the brooding forehead and the steely eye—that it seemed to stand distinct from the rest of the face, like a feature that had learned its part. There was that physical power in the back of the head which belongs to men who make their way in life—combative and destructive. All gladiators have it ; so have great debaters and great reformers—that is, reformers who can destroy, but not necessarily reconstruct. So, too, in the bearing of the man there was a hardy self-confidence, much too simple and unaffected for

his worst enemy to call it self-conceit. It was the bearing of one who knew how to maintain personal dignity without seeming to care about it. Never servile to the great, never arrogant to the little ; so little over-refined that it was never vulgar,—a popular bearing.

The room in which these gentlemen were seated was separated from the general suite of apartments by a lobby off the landing-place, and served for Lady Beaumanoir's boudoir. Very pretty it was, but simply furnished, with chintz draperies. The walls were adorned with drawings in water-colours, and precious specimens of china on fanciful Parian brackets. At one corner, by a window that looked southward and opened on a spacious balcony, glazed in and filled with flowers, stood one of those high trellised screens, first invented, I believe, in Vienna, and along which ivy is so trained as to form an arbour.

The recess thus constructed, and which was completely out of sight from the rest

of the room, was the hostess's favourite writing nook. The two men I have described were seated near the screen, and had certainly no suspicion that any one could be behind it.

"Yes," said Mr Danvers, from an ottoman niched in another recess of the room, "I think there will be an opening at Saxboro' soon. Milroy wants a colonial Government; and if we can reconstruct the Cabinet as I propose, he would get one. Saxboro' would thus be vacant. But, my dear fellow, Saxboro' is a place to be wooed through love, and only won through money. It demands liberalism from a candidate—two kinds of liberalism seldom united; the liberalism in opinion which is natural enough to a very poor man, and the liberalism in expenditure which is scarcely to be obtained except from a very rich one. You may compute the cost of Saxboro' at £3000 to get in, and about £2000 more to defend your seat against a petition—the defeated candidate nearly always petitions. £5000 is a large sum; and the worst of it is,

that the extreme opinions to which the member for Saxboro' must pledge himself are a drawback to an official career. Violent politicians are not the best raw material out of which to manufacture fortunate place-men."

"The opinions do not so much matter; the expense does. I cannot afford £5000, or even £3000."

"Would not Sir Peter assist? He has, you say, only one son; and if anything happen to that son, you are the next heir."

"My father quarrelled with Sir Peter, and harassed him by an imprudent and ungracious litigation. I scarcely think I could apply to him for money to obtain a seat in Parliament upon the democratic side of the question; for though I know little of his politics, I take it for granted that a country gentleman of old family and £10,000 a-year cannot well be a democrat."

"Then I presume you would not be a democrat if, by the death of your cousin, you became heir to the Chillinglys."

"I am not sure what I might be in that case. There are times when a democrat of ancient lineage and good estates could take a very high place amongst the aristocracy."

"Humph! my dear Gordon, *vous irez loin.*"

"I hope to do so. Measuring myself against the men of my own day, I do not see many who should outstrip me."

"What sort of a fellow is your cousin Kenelm? I met him once or twice when he was very young, and reading with Welby in London. People then said that he was very clever; he struck me as very odd."

"I never saw him; but from all I hear, whether he be clever or whether he be odd, he is not likely to do anything in life—a dreamer."

"Writes poetry perhaps?"

"Capable of it, I daresay."

Just then some other guests came into the room, amongst them a lady of an appearance at once singularly distinguished and singularly prepossessing, rather above the common

height, and with a certain indescribable nobility of air and presence. Lady Glenalvon was one of the queens of the London world, and no queen of that world was ever less worldly or more queen-like. Side by side with the lady was Mr Chillingly Mivers. Gordon and Mivers interchanged friendly nods, and the former sauntered away and was soon lost amid a crowd of other young men, with whom, as he could converse well and lightly on things which interested them, he was rather a favourite, though he was not an intimate associate. Mr Danvers retired into a corner of the adjoining lobby, where he favoured the French ambassador with his views on the state of Europe and the reconstruction of Cabinets in general.

"But," said Lady Glenalvon to Chillingly Mivers, "are you quite sure that my old young friend Kenelm is here? Since you told me so, I have looked everywhere for him in vain. I should so much like to see him again."

"I certainly caught a glimpse of him half an hour ago; but before I could escape from a

geologist, who was boring me about the Silurian system, Kenelm had vanished."

"Perhaps it was his ghost!"

"Well, we certainly live in the most credulous and superstitious age upon record; and so many people tell me that they converse with the dead under the table, that it seems impertinent in me to say that I don't believe in ghosts."

"Tell me some of those incomprehensible stories about table-rapping," said Lady Glenalvon. "There is a charming snug recess here behind the screen."

Scarcely had she entered the recess than she drew back with a start and an exclamation of amaze. Seated at the table within the recess, his chin resting on his hand, and his face cast down in abstracted reverie, was a young man. So still was his attitude, so calmly mournful the expression of his face, so estranged did he seem from all the motley but brilliant assemblage which circled around the solitude he had made for himself, that he might well have been deemed one of those

visitants from another world whose secrets the intruder had wished to learn. Of that intruder's presence he was evidently unconscious. Recovering her surprise, she stole up to him, placed her hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name in a low gentle voice. At that sound Kenelm Chillingly looked up.

"Do you not remember me?" asked Lady Glenalvon. Before he could answer, Mivers, who had followed the Marchioness into the recess, interposed.

"My dear Kenelm, how are you? When did you come to London? Why have you not called on me; and what on earth are you hiding yourself for?"

Kenelm had now recovered the self-possession which he rarely lost long in the presence of others. He returned cordially his kinsman's greeting, and kissed with his wonted chivalrous grace the fair hand which the lady withdrew from his shoulder and extended to his pressure. "Remember you!" he said to Lady Glenalvon, with the kindest expression of his soft dark eyes; "I am not

so far advanced towards the noon of life as to forget the sunshine that brightened its morning. My dear Mivers, your questions are easily answered. I arrived in England two weeks ago, stayed at Exmundham till this morning, to-day dined with Lord Thetford, whose acquaintance I made abroad, and was persuaded by him to come here and be introduced to his father and mother, the Beaumanoirs. After I had undergone that ceremony, the sight of so many strange faces frightened me into shyness. Entering this room at a moment when it was quite deserted, I resolved to turn hermit behind the screen."

"Why, you must have seen your cousin Gordon as you came into the room."

"But you forget I don't know him by sight. However, there was no one in the room when I entered; a little later some others came in, for I heard a faint buzz, like that of persons talking in a whisper. However, I was no eavesdropper, as a person behind a screen is on the dramatic stage."

This was true. Even had Gordon and

Danvers talked in a louder tone, Kenelm had been too absorbed in his own thoughts to have heard a word of their conversation.

"You ought to know young Gordon; he is a very clever fellow, and has an ambition to enter Parliament. I hope no old family quarrel between his bear of a father and dear Sir Peter will make you object to meet him."

"Sir Peter is the most forgiving of men, but he would scarcely forgive me if I declined to meet a cousin who had never offended him."

"Well said. Come and meet Gordon at breakfast to-morrow—ten o'clock. I am still in the old rooms."

While the kinsmen thus conversed, Lady Glenalvon had seated herself on the couch beside Kenelm, and was quietly observing his countenance. Now she spoke: "My dear Mr Mivers, you will have many opportunities of talking with Kenelm; do not grudge me five minutes' talk with him now."

"I leave your ladyship alone in her hermitage. How all the men in this assembly will envy the hermit!"

CHAPTER II.

"I AM glad to see you once more in the world," said Lady Glenalvon, "and I trust that you are now prepared to take that part in it, which ought to be no mean one if you do justice to your talents and your nature."

KENELM.—"When you go to the theatre, and see one of the pieces which appear now to be the fashion, which would you rather be—an actor or a looker-on?"

LADY GLENALVON.—"My dear young friend, your question saddens me." (After a pause.)—"But though I used a stage metaphor when I expressed my hope that you would take no mean part in the world, the world is not really a theatre. Life admits of no lookers-on. Speak to me frankly, as you used to do. Your face retains its old melancholy expression. Are you not happy?"

KENELM.—“Happy, as mortals go, I ought to be. I do not think I am unhappy. If my temper be melancholic, melancholy has a happiness of its own. Milton shows that there are as many charms in life to be found on the *Penseroso* side of it as there are on the *Allegro*.”

LADY GLENALVON.—“Kenelm, you saved the life of my poor son, and when, later, he was taken from me, I felt as if he had commended you to my care. When at the age of sixteen, with a boy’s years and a man’s heart, you came to London, did I not try to be to you almost as a mother? and did you not often tell me that you could confide to me the secrets of your heart more readily than to any other?”

“You were to me,” said Kenelm, with emotion, “that most precious and sustaining good genius which a youth can find at the threshold of life—a woman gently wise, kindly sympathising, shaming him by the spectacle of her own purity from all grosser errors, elevating him from mean tastes and objects by the exquisite, ineffable loftiness

of soul which is only found in the noblest order of womanhood. Come, I will open my heart to you still. I fear it is more wayward than ever. It still feels estranged from the companionship and pursuits natural to my age and station. However, I have been seeking to brace and harden my nature, for the practical ends of life, by travel and adventure, chiefly among rougher varieties of mankind than we meet in drawing-rooms. Now, in compliance with the duty I owe to my dear father's wishes, I come back to these circles, which under your auspices I entered in boyhood, and which even then seemed to me so inane and artificial. Take a part in the world of these circles; such is your wish. My answer is brief. I have been doing my best to acquire a motive power, and I have not succeeded. I see nothing that I care to strive for, nothing that I care to gain. The very times in which we live are to me as to Hamlet—out of joint; and I am not born like Hamlet to set them right. Ah! if I could look on society through

the spectacles with which the poor hidalgo in 'Gil Blas' looked on his meagre board—spectacles by which cherries appear the size of peaches, and tomtits as large as turkeys! The imagination which is necessary to ambition is a great magnifier."

"I have known more than one man, now very eminent, very active, who at your age felt the same estrangement from the practical pursuits of others."

"And what reconciled those men to such pursuits?"

"That diminished sense of individual personality, that unconscious fusion of one's own being into other existences, which belong to home and marriage."

"I don't object to home, but I do to marriage."

"Depend on it, there is no home for man where there is no woman."

"Prettily said. In that case I resign the home."

"Do you mean seriously to tell me that you never see the woman you could love

enough to make her your wife, and never enter any home that you do not quit with a touch of envy at the happiness of married life ? ”

“ Seriously, I never see such a woman ; seriously, I never enter such a home.”

“ Patience, then ; your time will come, and I hope it is at hand. Listen to me. It was only yesterday that I felt an indescribable longing to see you again—to know your address, that I might write to you ; for yesterday, when a certain young lady left my house, after a week’s visit, I said, this girl would make a perfect wife, and, above all, the exact wife to suit Kenelm Chillingly.”

“ Kenelm Chillingly is very glad to hear that this young lady has left your house.”

“ But she has not left London—she is here to-night. She only stayed with me till her father came to town, and the house he had taken for the season was vacant ; those events happened yesterday.”

“ Fortunate events for me : they permit me to call on you without danger.”

“Have you no curiosity to know, at least, who and what is the young lady who appears to me so well suited to you?”

“No curiosity, but a vague sensation of alarm.”

“Well, I cannot talk pleasantly with you while you are in this irritating mood, and it is time to quit the hermitage. Come, there are many persons here with some of whom you should renew old acquaintance, and to some of whom I should like to make you known.”

“I am prepared to follow Lady Glenalvon wherever she deigns to lead me—except to the altar with another.”

CHAPTER III.

THE rooms were now full—not overcrowded, but full—and it was rarely even in that house that so many distinguished persons were collected together. A young man thus honoured by so *grande a dame* as Lady Glenalvon, could not but be cordially welcomed by all to whom she presented him, Ministers and Parliamentary leaders, ball-givers and beauties in vogue—even authors and artists ; and there was something in Kenelm Chillingly, in his striking countenance and figure, in that calm ease of manner natural to his indifference to effect, which seemed to justify the favour shown to him by the brilliant princess of fashion, and mark him out for general observation.

That first evening of his reintroduction to

the polite world was a success which few young men of his years achieve. He produced a sensation. Just as the rooms were thinning, Lady Glenalvon whispered to Kenelm—

“Come this way—there is one person I must reintroduce you to—thank me for it hereafter.”

Kenelm followed the Marchioness, and found himself face to face with Cecilia Travers. She was leaning on her father's arm, looking very handsome, and her beauty was heightened by the blush which overspread her cheeks as Kenelm Chillingly approached.

Travers greeted him with great cordiality; and Lady Glenalvon asking him to escort her to the refreshment-room, Kenelm had no option but to offer his arm to Cecilia.

Kenelm felt somewhat embarrassed. “Have you been long in town, Miss Travers?”

“A little more than a week, but we only settled into our house yesterday.”

"Ah, indeed ! were you then the young lady who——" He stopped short, and his face grew gentler and graver in its expression.

"The young lady who—what ?" asked Cecilia, with a smile.

"Who has been staying with Lady Glenalvon ?"

"Yes ; did she tell you ?"

"She did not mention your name, but praised that young lady so justly that I ought to have guessed it."

Cecilia made some not very audible answer, and on entering the refreshment-room other young men gathered round her, and Lady Glenalvon and Kenelm remained silent in the midst of a general small-talk. When Travers, after giving his address to Kenelm, and, of course, pressing him to call, left the house with Cecilia, Kenelm said to Lady Glenalvon, musingly, "So that is the young lady in whom I was to see my fate : you knew that we had met before ?"

"Yes, she told me when and where.

Besides, it is not two years since you wrote to me from her father's house. Do you forget?"

"Ah," said Kenelm, so abstractedly that he seemed to be dreaming, "no man with his eyes open rushes on his fate; when he does so, his sight is gone. Love is blind. They say the blind are very happy, yet I never met a blind man who would not recover his sight if he could."

CHAPTER IV.

MR CHILLINGLY MIVERS never gave a dinner at his own rooms. When he did give a dinner, it was at Greenwich or Richmond. But he gave breakfast-parties pretty often, and they were considered pleasant. He had handsome bachelor apartments in Grosvenor Street, daintily furnished, with a prevalent air of exquisite neatness. A good library stored with books of reference, and adorned with presentation copies from authors of the day, very beautifully bound. Though the room served for the study of the professed man of letters, it had none of the untidy litter which generally characterises the study of one whose vocation it is to deal with books and papers. Even the implements for writing were not apparent, except when required.

They lay concealed in a vast cylinder bureau, French made, and French polished. Within that bureau were numerous pigeon-holes and secret drawers, and a profound well with a separate patent lock. In the well were deposited the articles intended for publication in 'The Londoner'—proof-sheets, &c. ; pigeon-holes were devoted to ordinary correspondence ; secret drawers to confidential notes, and outlines of biographies of eminent men now living, but intended to be completed for publication the day after their death.

No man wrote such funereal compositions with a livelier pen than that of Chillingly Mivers ; and the large and miscellaneous circle of his visiting acquaintances allowed him to ascertain, whether by authoritative report or by personal observation, the signs of mortal disease in the illustrious friends whose dinners he accepted, and whose failing pulses he instinctively felt in returning the pressure of their hands, so that he was often able to put the finishing-stroke to

their obituary memorials, days, weeks, even months, before their fate took the public by surprise. That cylinder bureau was in harmony with the secrecy in which this remarkable man shrouded the productions of his brain. In his literary life Mivers had no "I;" there he was ever the inscrutable, mysterious "We." He was only "I" when you met him in the world, and called him Mivers.

Adjoining the library on one side was a small dining or rather breakfast room, hung with valuable pictures—presents from living painters. Many of these painters had been severely handled by Mr Mivers in his existence as "We,"—not always in 'The Londoner.' His most pungent criticisms were often contributed to other intellectual journals, conducted by members of the same intellectual clique. Painters knew not how contemptuously "We" had treated them when they met Mr Mivers. His "I" was so complimentary that they sent him a tribute of their gratitude.

On the other side was his drawing-room,

also enriched by many gifts, chiefly from fair hands—embroidered cushions and table-covers, bits of Sèvres or old Chelsea, elegant knick - knacks of all kinds. Fashionable authoresses paid great court to Mr Mivers ; and in the course of his life as a single man, he had other female adorers besides fashionable authoresses.

Mr Mivers had already returned from his early constitutional walk in the Park, and was now seated by the cylinder *secrétaire* with a mild-looking man, who was one of the most merciless contributors to ‘The Londoner,’ and no unimportant councillor in the oligarchy of the clique that went by the name of the “Intellectuals.”

“Well,” said Mivers, languidly, “I can’t even get through the book ; it is as dull as the country in November. But, as you justly say, the writer is an ‘Intellectual,’ and a clique would be anything but intellectual if it did not support its members. Review the book yourself—mind and make the dulness of it the signal proof of its

merit. Say—"To the ordinary class of readers this exquisite work may appear less brilliant than the flippant smartness of"—any other author you like to name; 'but to the well-educated and intelligent every line is pregnant with,' &c. &c. By the way, when we come by-and-by to review the exhibition at Burlington House, there is one painter whom we must try our best to crush. I have not seen his pictures myself, but he is a new man, and our friend, who has seen him, is terribly jealous of him, and says that if the good judges do not put him down at once, the villanous taste of the public will set him up as a prodigy. A low-lived fellow too, I hear. There is the name of the man and the subject of the pictures. See to it when the time comes. Meanwhile, prepare the way for onslaught on the pictures by occasional sneers at the painter." Mr Mivers here took out of his cylinder a confidential note from the jealous rival, and handed it to his mild-looking *confrère*; then rising, he said, "I fear we must suspend business till

to-morrow; I expect two young cousins to breakfast."

As soon as the mild-looking man was gone, Mr Mivers sauntered to his drawing-room window, amiably offering a lump of sugar to a canary-bird sent him as a present the day before, and who, in the gilded cage which made part of the present, scanned him suspiciously, and refused the sugar.

Time had remained very gentle in its dealings with Chillingly Mivers. He scarcely looked a day older than when he was first presented to the reader on the birth of his kinsman Kenelm. He was reaping the fruit of his own sage maxims. Free from whiskers and safe in wig, there was no sign of grey—no suspicion of dye. Superiority to passion, abnegation of sorrow, indulgence of amusement, avoidance of excess, had kept away the crow's-feet, preserved the elasticity of his frame and the unflushed clearness of his gentlemanlike complexion. The door opened, and a well-dressed valet, who had lived long enough with Mivers to grow very

much like him, announced Mr Chillingly Gordon.

“ Good morning,” said Mivers ; “ I was much pleased to see you talking so long and so familiarly with Danvers : others, of course, observed it, and it added a step to your career. It does you great good to be seen in a drawing-room talking apart with a Somebody. But may I ask if the talk itself was satisfactory ? ”

“ Not at all : Danvers throws cold water on the notion of Saxboro’, and does not even hint that his party will help me to any other opening. Party has few openings at its disposal nowadays for any young man. The schoolmaster being abroad has swept away the school for statesmen as he has swept away the school for actors—an evil, and an evil of a far graver consequence to the destinies of the nation than any good likely to be got from the system that succeeded it.”

“ But it is of no use railing against things that can’t be helped. If I were you, I would

postpone all ambition of Parliament, and read for the bar."

"The advice is sound, but too unpalatable to be taken. I am resolved to find a seat in the House, and where there is a will there is a way."

"I am not so sure of that."

"But I am."

"Judging by what your contemporaries at the University tell me of your speeches at the Debating Society, you were not then an ultra-Radical. But it is only an ultra-Radical who has a chance of success at Saxboro'."

"I am no fanatic in politics. There is much to be said on all sides—*cæteris paribus*, I prefer the winning side to the losing: nothing succeeds like success."

"Ay, but in politics there is always reaction. The winning side one day may be the losing side another. The losing side represents a minority, and a minority is sure to comprise more intellect than a majority: in the long-run intellect will force its way;

get a majority and then lose it, because with a majority it will become stupid."

"Cousin Mivers, does not the history of the world show you that a single individual can upset all theories as to the comparative wisdom of the few or the many? Take the wisest few you can find, and one man of genius not a tithe so wise crushes them into powder. But then that man of genius, though he despises the many, must make use of them. That done, he rules them. Don't you see how in free countries political destinations resolve themselves into individual impersonations? At a general election it is one name around which electors rally. The candidate may enlarge as much as he pleases on political principles, but all his talk will not win him votes enough for success, unless he says, 'I go with Mr A.,' the Minister, or with Mr Z., the chief of the Opposition. It was not the Tories who beat the Whigs when Mr Pitt dissolved Parliament. It was Mr Pitt who beat Mr Fox, with whom in general political principles—slave-trade, Roman Catholic emancipation, Parliament-

ary reform—he certainly agreed much more than he did with any man in his own Cabinet.”

“Take care, my young cousin,” cried Mivers, in accents of alarm; “don’t set up for a man of genius. Genius is the worst quality a public man can have nowadays—nobody heeds it, and everybody is jealous of it.”

“Pardon me, you mistake; my remark was purely objective, and intended as a reply to your argument. I prefer at present to go with the many because it is the winning side. If we then want a man of genius to keep it the winning side, by subjugating its partisans to his will, he will be sure to come. The few will drive him to us, for the few are always the enemies of the one man of genius. It is they who distrust—it is they who are jealous—not the many. You have allowed your judgment, usually so clear, to be somewhat dimmed by your experience as a critic. The critics are the *few*. They have infinitely more culture than the many. But when a man of real genius appears and asserts himself, the critics are seldom such fair judges of

him as the many are. If he be not one of their oligarchical clique, they either abuse, or disparage, or affect to ignore him ; though a time at last comes when, having gained the many, the critics acknowledge him. But the difference between the man of action and the author is this, that the author rarely finds this acknowledgment till he is dead, and it is necessary to the man of action to enforce it while he is alive. But enough of this speculation : you ask me to meet Kenelm—is he not coming ? ”

“ Yes, but I did not ask him till ten o’clock. I asked you at half-past nine, because I wished to hear about Danvers and Saxboro’, and also to prepare you somewhat for your introduction to your cousin. I must be brief as to the last, for it is only five minutes to the hour, and he is a man likely to be punctual. Kenelm is in all ways your opposite. I don’t know whether he is cleverer or less clever—there is no scale of measurement between you ; but he is wholly void of ambition, and might possibly assist yours. He can do what he likes with Sir Peter ; and con-

sidering how your poor father—a worthy man, but cantankerous—harassed and persecuted Sir Peter, because Kenelm came between the estate and you, it is probable that Sir Peter bears you a grudge, though Kenelm declares him incapable of it; and it would be well if you could annul that grudge in the father by conciliating the goodwill of the son.”

“I should be glad so to annul it: but what is Kenelm’s weak side?—the turf? the hunting-field? women? poetry? One can only conciliate a man by getting on his weak side.”

“Hist! I see him from the windows. Kenelm’s weak side was, when I knew him some years ago, and I rather fancy it still is——”

“Well, make haste! I hear his ring at your door-bell.”

“A passionate longing to find ideal truth in real life.”

“Ah!” said Gordon, “as I thought—a mere dreamer.”

CHAPTER V.

KENELM entered the room. The young cousins were introduced, shook hands, receded a step, and gazed at each other. It is scarcely possible to conceive a greater contrast outwardly than that between the two Chillingly representatives of the rising generation. Each was silently impressed by the sense of that contrast. Each felt that the contrast implied antagonism, and that if they two met in the same arena it must be as rival combatants; still, by some mysterious intuition each felt a certain respect for the other, each divined in the other a power that he could not fairly estimate, but against which his own power would be strongly tasked to contend. So might exchange looks a thorough-bred deer-hound and a

half-bred mastiff : the bystander could scarcely doubt which was the nobler animal, but he might hesitate which to bet on, if the two came to deadly quarrel. Meanwhile the thorough-bred deer-hound and the half-bred mastiff sniffed at each other in polite salutation. Gordon was the first to give tongue.

"I have long wished to know you personally," said he, throwing into his voice and manner that delicate kind of deference which a well-born cadet owes to the destined head of his house. "I cannot conceive how I missed you last night at Lady Beaumanoir's, where Mivers tells me he met you ; but I left early."

Here Mivers led the way to the breakfast-room, and there seated, the host became the principal talker, running with lively glibness over the principal topics of the day—the last scandal, the last new book, the reform of the army, the reform of the turf, the critical state of Spain, and the *début* of an Italian singer. He seemed an embodied

Journal, including the Leading Article, the Law Reports, Foreign Intelligence, the Court Circular, down to the Births, Deaths, and Marriages. Gordon from time to time interrupted this flow of soul with brief, trenchant remarks, which evinced his own knowledge of the subjects treated, and a habit of looking on all subjects connected with the pursuits and business of mankind from a high ground appropriated to himself, and through the medium of that blue glass which conveys a wintry aspect to summer landscapes. Kenelm said little, but listened attentively.

The conversation arrested its discursive nature, to settle upon a political chief—the highest in fame and station of that party to which Mivers professed—not to belong, he belonged to himself alone,—but to appropriate. Mivers spoke of this chief with the greatest distrust, and in a spirit of general depreciation. Gordon acquiesced in the distrust and the depreciation, adding—“But he is master of the position, and must, of

course, be supported through thick and thin for the present."

"Yes, for the present," said Mivers; "one has no option. But you will see some clever articles in 'The Londoner' towards the close of the session, which will damage him greatly, by praising him in the wrong place, and deepening the alarm of important followers—an alarm now at work, though suppressed."

Here Kenelm asked, in humble tones, "Why Gordon thought that a Minister he considered so untrustworthy and dangerous must, for the present, be supported through thick and thin."

"Because at present a member elected so to support him, would lose his seat if he did not: needs must when the devil drives."

KENELM.—"When the devil drives, I should have thought it better to resign one's seat on the coach; perhaps one might be of some use, out of it, in helping to put on the drag."

MIVERS.—"Cleverly said, Kenelm. But,

metaphor apart, Gordon is right : a young politician must go with his party ; a veteran journalist like myself is more independent. So long as the journalist blames everybody, he will have plenty of readers."

Kenelm made no reply, and Gordon changed the conversation from men to measures. He spoke of some Bills before Parliament with remarkable ability, evincing much knowledge of the subject, much critical acuteness, illustrating their defects, and proving the danger of their ultimate consequences.

Kenelm was greatly struck with the vigour of this cold, clear mind, and owned to himself that the House of Commons was a fitting place for its development.

"But," said Mivers, "would you not be obliged to defend these Bills if you were member for Saxboro'?"

"Before I answer your question, answer me this. Dangerous as the Bills are, is it not necessary that they shall pass? Have not the public so resolved?"

"There can be no doubt of that."

"Then the member for Saxboro' cannot be strong enough to go against the public."

"Progress of the age!" said Kenelm, musingly. "Do you think the class of gentlemen will long last in England?"

"What do you call gentlemen? The aristocracy by birth?—the *gentilhommes*?"

"Nay, I suppose no laws can take away a man's ancestors, and a class of well-born men is not to be exterminated. But a mere class of well-born men—without duties, responsibilities, or sentiment of that which becomes good birth in devotion to country or individual honour—does no good to a nation. It is a misfortune which statesmen of democratic creed ought to recognise, that the class of the well-born cannot be destroyed—it must remain as it remained in Rome and remains in France, after all efforts to extirpate it, as the most dangerous class of citizens when you deprive it of the attributes which made it the most serviceable. I am not speaking of that class; I speak of that un-

classified order peculiar to England, which, no doubt, forming itself originally from the ideal standard of honour and truth supposed to be maintained by the *gentilhommes*, or well-born, no longer requires pedigrees and acres to confer upon its members the designation of gentlemen ; and when I hear a 'gentleman' say that he has no option but to think one thing and say another, at whatever risk to his country, I feel as if in the progress of the age the class of gentlemen was about to be superseded by some finer development of species."

Therewith Kenelm rose, and would have taken his departure, if Gordon had not seized his hand and detained him.

"My dear cousin, if I may so call you," he said, with the frank manner which was usual to him, and which suited well the bold expression of his face and the clear ring of his voice—"I am one of those who, from an over-dislike to sentimentality and cant, often make those not intimately acquainted with them think worse of their principles than

they deserve. It may be quite true that a man who goes with his party dislikes the measures he feels bound to support, and says so openly when among friends and relations, yet that man is not therefore devoid of loyalty and honour ; and I trust, when you know me better, you will not think it likely I should derogate from that class of gentlemen to which we both belong."

"Pardon me if I seemed rude," answered Kenelm ; " ascribe it to my ignorance of the necessities of public life. It struck me that where a politician thought a thing evil, he ought not to support it as good. But I dare say I am mistaken."

"Entirely mistaken," said Mivers, " and for this reason : in politics formerly there was a direct choice between good and evil. That rarely exists now. Men of high education having to choose whether to accept or reject a measure forced upon their option by constituent bodies of very low education, are called upon to weigh evil against evil—the evil of accepting or the evil of rejecting ;

and if they resolve on the first, it is as the lesser evil of the two."

"Your definition is perfect," said Gordon, "and I am contented to rest on it my excuse for what my cousin deems insincerity."

"I suppose that is real life," said Kenelm, with his mournful smile.

"Of course it is," said Mivers.

"Every day I live," sighed Kenelm, "still more confirms my conviction that real life is a phantasmal sham. How absurd it is in philosophers to deny the existence of apparitions! what apparitions we, living men, must seem to the ghosts!

" 'The spirits of the wise
Sit in the clouds and mock us.' "

CHAPTER VI.

CHILLINGLY GORDON did not fail to confirm his acquaintance with Kenelm. He very often looked in upon him of a morning, sometimes joined him in his afternoon rides, introduced him to men of his own set who were mostly busy members of Parliament, rising barristers, or political journalists, but not without a proportion of brilliant idlers—club men, sporting men, men of fashion, rank, and fortune. He did so with a purpose, for these persons spoke well of him—spoke well not only of his talents, but of his honourable character. His general nickname amongst them was “HONEST GORDON.” Kenelm at first thought this *sobriquet* must be ironical; not a bit of it. It was given to him on account of the candour and bold-

ness with which he expressed opinions embodying that sort of cynicism which is vulgarly called "the absence of humbug." The man was certainly no hypocrite; he affected no beliefs which he did not entertain. And he had very few beliefs in anything, except the first half of the adage, "Every man for himself,—and God for us all."

But whatever Chillingly Gordon's theoretical disbeliefs in things which make the current creed of the virtuous, there was nothing in his conduct which evinced predilection for vices: he was strictly upright in all his dealings, and in delicate matters of honour was a favourite umpire amongst his coevals. Though so frankly ambitious, no one could accuse him of attempting to climb on the shoulders of patrons. There was nothing servile in his nature, and though he was perfectly prepared to bribe electors if necessary, no money could have bought himself. His one master-passion was the desire of power. He sneered at patriotism as a worn-out prejudice, at philanthropy as a

sentimental catch-word. He did not want to serve his country, but to rule it. He did not want to raise mankind, but to rise himself. He was therefore unscrupulous, unprincipled, as hungerers after power for itself too often are ; yet still if he got power he would probably use it well, from the clearness and strength of his mental perceptions. The impression he made on Kenelm may be seen in the following letter :—

TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., ETC.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—You and my dear mother will be pleased to hear that London continues very polite to me : that ‘arida nutrix leonum’ enrols me among the pet class of lions which ladies of fashion admit into the society of their lap-dogs. It is somewhere about six years since I was allowed to gaze on this peep-show through the loopholes of Mr Welby’s retreat. It appears to me, perhaps erroneously, that even within that short space of time the tone of ‘society’ is perceptibly changed.

That the change is for the better is an assertion I leave to those who belong to the *progressista* party.

"I don't think nearly so many young ladies six years ago painted their eyelids and dyed their hair : a few of them there might be, imitators of the slang invented by school-boys and circulated through the medium of small novelists ; they might use such expressions as 'stunning,' 'cheek,' 'awfully jolly,' &c. But now I find a great many who have advanced to a slang beyond that of verbal expressions,—a slang of mind, a slang of sentiment, a slang in which very little seems left of the woman, and nothing at all of the lady.

"Newspaper essayists assert that the young men of the day are to blame for this ; that the young men like it, and the fair husband-anglers dress their flies in the colours most likely to attract a nibble. Whether this excuse be the true one I cannot pretend to judge. But it strikes me that the men about my own age who affect to be fast are a more

languid race than the men from ten to twenty years older, whom they regard as *slow*. The habit of dram-drinking in the morning is a very new idea, an idea greatly in fashion at the moment. Adonis calls for a 'pick-me-up' before he has strength enough to answer a *billet-doux* from Venus. Adonis has not the strength to get nobly drunk, but his delicate constitution requires stimulants, and he is always tippling.

"The men of high birth or renown for social success, belonging, my dear father, to your time, are still distinguished by an air of good-breeding, by a style of conversation more or less polished and not without evidences of literary culture, from men of the same rank in my generation, who appear to pride themselves on respecting nobody and knowing nothing, not even grammar. Still we are assured that the world goes on steadily improving. *That* new idea is in full vigour.

"Society in the concrete has become wonderfully conceited as to its own pro-

gressive excellences, and the individuals who form the concrete entertain the same complacent opinion of themselves. There are, of course, even in my brief and imperfect experience, many exceptions to what appear to me the prevalent characteristics of the rising generation in 'society.' Of these exceptions I must content myself with naming the most remarkable. *Place aux dames*, the first I name is Cecilia Travers. She and her father are now in town, and I meet them frequently. I can conceive no civilised era in the world which a woman like Cecilia Travers would not grace and adorn, because she is essentially the type of woman as man likes to imagine woman—viz., on the fairest side of the womanly character. . And I say 'woman' rather than girl, because among 'Girls of the Period' Cecilia Travers cannot be classed. You might call her damsel, virgin, maiden, but you could no more call her girl than you could call a well-born French demoiselle '*filles*.' She is handsome enough to please

the eye of any man, however fastidious, but not that kind of beauty which dazzles all men too much to fascinate one man ; for—speaking, thank heaven, from mere theory—I apprehend that the love for woman has in it a strong sense of property ; that one requires to individualise one's possession as being wholly one's own, and not a possession which all the public are invited to admire. I can readily understand how a rich man, who has what is called a show place, in which the splendid rooms and the stately gardens are open to all inspectors, so that he has no privacy in his own demesnes, runs away to a pretty cottage which he has all to himself, and of which he can say, '*This is Home—this is all mine.*'

“ But there are some kinds of beauty which are eminently show places—which the public think they have as much a right to admire as the owner has ; and the show place itself would be dull, and perhaps fall out of repair, if the public could be excluded from the sight of it.

“The beauty of Cecilia Travers is not that of a show place. There is a feeling of safety in her. If Desdemona had been like her, Othello would not have been jealous. But then Cecilia would not have deceived her father—nor I think have told a blackamoor that she wished ‘Heaven had made her such a man.’ Her mind harmonises with her person—it is a companionable mind. Her talents are not showy, but, take them altogether, they form a pleasant whole: she has good sense enough in the practical affairs of life, and enough of that ineffable womanly gift called tact to counteract the effects of whimsical natures like mine, and yet enough sense of the humoristic views of life not to take too literally all that a whimsical man like myself may say. As to temper, one never knows what a woman’s temper is—till one puts her out of it. But I imagine hers, in its normal state, to be serene, and disposed to be cheerful. Now, my dear father, if you were not one of the cleverest of men you would infer from this eulogistic

mention of Cecilia Travers that I was in love with her. But you no doubt will detect the truth, that a man in love with a woman does not weigh her merits with so steady a hand as that which guides this steel pen. I am not in love with Cecilia Travers. I wish I were. When Lady Glenalvon, who remains wonderfully kind to me, says, day after day, 'Cecilia Travers would make you a perfect wife,' I have no answer to give, but I don't feel the least inclined to ask Cecilia Travers if she would waste her perfection on one who so coldly concedes it.

"I find that she persisted in rejecting the man whom her father wished her to marry, and that he has consoled himself by marrying somebody else. No doubt other suitors as worthy will soon present themselves.

"Oh, dearest of all my friends—sole friend whom I regard as a confidant—shall I ever be in love? and if not, why not? Sometimes I feel as if, with love as with ambition, it is because I have some impossible ideal

in each, that I must always remain indifferent to the sort of love and the sort of ambition which are within my reach. I have an idea that if I did love, I should love as intensely as Romeo, and that thought inspires me with vague forebodings of terror; and if I did find an object to arouse my ambition, I could be as earnest in its pursuit as—whom shall I name?—Cæsar or Cato? I like Cato's ambition the better of the two. But people nowadays call ambition an impracticable crotchet, if it be invested on the losing side. Cato would have saved Rome from the mob and the dictator; but Rome could not be saved, and Cato falls on his own sword. Had we a Cato now, the verdict at the coroner's inquest would be, 'suicide while in a state of unsound mind;' and the verdict would have been proved by his senseless resistance to a mob and a dictator! Talking of ambition, I come to the other exception to the youth of the day—I have named a *demoiselle*, I now name a *damoiseau*. Imagine a man of about

five-and-twenty, and who is morally about fifty years older than a healthy man of sixty,—imagine him with the brain of age and the flower of youth—with a heart absorbed into the brain, and giving warm blood to frigid ideas—a man who sneers at everything I call lofty, yet would do nothing that *he* thinks mean—to whom vice and virtue are as indifferent as they were to the *Æsthetics* of Goethe—who would never jeopardise his career as a practical reasoner by an imprudent virtue, and never sully his reputation by a degrading vice. Imagine this man with an intellect keen, strong, ready, unscrupulous, dauntless—all cleverness and no genius. Imagine this man, and then do not be astonished when I tell you he is a Chillingly.

“The Chillingly race culminates in him, and becomes Chillinglyest. In fact, it seems to me that we live in a day precisely suited to the Chillingly idiosyncrasies. During the ten centuries or more that our race has held local habitation and a name,

it has been as airy nothings. Its representatives lived in hot-blooded times, and were compelled to skulk in still water with their emblematic Daces. But the times now, my dear father, are so cold-blooded that you can't be too cold-blooded to prosper. What could Chillingly Mivers have been in an age when people cared twopence-halfpenny about their religious creeds, and their political parties deemed their cause was sacred, and their leaders were heroes? Chillingly Mivers would not have found five subscribers to 'The Londoner.' But now 'The Londoner' is the favourite organ of the intellectual public; it sneers away all the foundations of the social system, without an attempt at reconstruction; and every new journal set up, if it keep its head above water, models itself on 'The Londoner.' Chillingly Mivers is a great man, and the most potent writer of the age, though nobody knows what he has written. Chillingly Gordon is a still more notable instance of the rise of the Chillingly worth in the modern market.

"There is a general impression in the most authoritative circles that Chillingly Gordon will have high rank in the van of the coming men. His confidence in himself is so thorough that it infects all with whom he comes into contact—myself included.

"He said to me the other day, with a *sang-froid* worthy of the iciest Chillingly, 'I mean to be Prime Minister of England—it is only a question of time.' Now, if Chillingly Gordon is to be Prime Minister, it will be because the increasing cold of our moral and social atmosphere will exactly suit the development of his talents.

"He is the man above all others to argue down the declaimers of old-fashioned sentimentalities, love of country, care for its position among nations, zeal for its honour, pride in its renown. (Oh, if you could hear him philosophically and logically sneer away the word 'prestige!') Such notions are fast being classified as 'bosh.' And when that classification is complete—when England has no colonies to defend, no navy

to pay for, no interest in the affairs of other nations, and has attained to the happy condition of Holland, — then Chillingly Gordon will be her Prime Minister.

“ Yet while, if ever I am stung into political action, it will be by abnegation of the Chillingly attributes, and in opposition, however hopeless, to Chillingly Gordon, I feel that this man cannot be suppressed and ought to have fair play ; his ambition will be infinitely more dangerous if it become soured by delay. I propose, my dear father, that you should have the honour of laying this clever kinsman under an obligation, and enabling him to enter Parliament. In our last conversation at Exmundham, you told me of the frank resentment of Gordon *père*, when my coming into the world shut him out from the Exmundham inheritance ; you confided to me your intention at that time to lay by yearly a sum that might ultimately serve as a provision for Gordon *fils*, and as some compensation for the loss of his expectations when you realised your hope of an heir ; you

told me also how this generous intention on your part had been frustrated by a natural indignation at the elder Gordon's conduct in his harassing and costly litigation, and by the addition you had been tempted to make to the estate in a purchase which added to its acreage, but at a rate of interest which diminished your own income, and precluded the possibility of further savings. Now, chancing to meet your lawyer, Mr Vining, the other day, I learned from him that it had been long a wish which your delicacy prevented your naming to me, that I, to whom the fee-simple descends, should join with you in cutting off the entail and resettling the estate. He showed me what an advantage this would be to the property, because it would leave your hands free for many improvements in which I heartily go with the progress of the age, for which, as merely tenant for life, you could not raise the money except upon ruinous terms; new cottages for labourers, new buildings for tenants, the consolidation of some old mortgages and charges on the

rent-roll, &c. And allow me to add that I should like to make a large increase to the jointure of my dear mother. Vining says, too, that there is a part of the outlying land which, as being near a town, could be sold to considerable profit if the estate were re-settled.

“Let us hasten to complete the necessary deeds, and so obtain the £20,000 required for the realisation of your noble, and let me add, your just desire to do something for Chillingly Gordon. In the new deeds of settlement we could insure the power of willing the estate as we pleased, and I am strongly against devising it to Chillingly Gordon. It may be a crotchet of mine, but one which I think you share, that the owner of English soil should have a son’s love for the native land, and Gordon will never have that. I think, too, that it will be best for his own career, and for the establishment of a frank understanding between us and himself, that he should be fairly told that he would not be benefited in the event of our deaths.

Twenty thousand pounds given to him now would be a greater boon to him than ten times the sum twenty years later. With that at his command, he can enter Parliament, and have an income, added to what he now possesses, if modest, still sufficient to make him independent of a Minister's patronage.

"Pray humour me, my dearest father, in the proposition I venture to submit to you.—Your affectionate son,

"KENELM."

FROM SIR PETER CHILLINGLY TO KENELM
CHILLINGLY.

"MY DEAR BOY,—You are not worthy to be a Chillingly; you are decidedly warm-blooded: never was a load lifted off a man's mind with a gentler hand. Yes, I have wished to cut off the entail and resettle the property; but as it was eminently to my advantage to do so, I shrank from asking it, though eventually it would be almost as much to your own advantage. What with the purchase I made

of the Faircleuch lands—which I could only effect by money borrowed at high interest on my personal security, and paid off by yearly instalments, eating largely into income—and the old mortgages, &c., I own I have been pinched of late years. But what rejoices me the most is the power to make homes for our honest labourers more comfortable, and nearer to their work, which last is the chief point, for the old cottages in themselves are not bad; the misfortune is, when you build an extra room for the children, the silly people let it out to a lodger.

“My dear boy, I am very much touched by your wish to increase your mother’s jointure—a very proper wish, independently of filial feeling, for she brought to the estate a very pretty fortune, which the trustees consented to my investing in land; and though the land completed our ring-fence, it does not bring in two per cent, and the conditions of the entail limited the right of jointure to an amount below that which a widowed Lady Chillingly may fairly expect.

“I care more about the provision on these points than I do for the interests of old Chillingly Gordon’s son. I had meant to behave very handsomely to the father; and when the return for behaving handsomely is being put into Chancery—A Worm Will Turn. Nevertheless, I agree with you that a son should not be punished for his father’s faults; and if the sacrifice of £20,000 makes you and myself feel that we are better Christians and truer gentlemen, we shall buy that feeling very cheaply.”

Sir Peter then proceeded, half jestingly, half seriously, to combat Kenelm’s declaration that he was not in love with Cecilia Travers; and, urging the advantages of marriage with one whom Kenelm allowed would be a perfect wife, astutely remarked, that unless Kenelm had a son of his own, it did not seem to him quite just to the next of kin to will the property from him, upon no better plea than the want of love for his native country. “He would love his country fast enough if he had 10,000 acres in it.”

Kenelm shook his head when he came to this sentence.

“Is even, then, love for one’s country but cupboard-love after all?” said he; and he postponed finishing the perusal of his father’s letter.

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM CHILLINGLY did not exaggerate the social position he had acquired when he classed himself amongst the lions of the fashionable world. I dare not count the number of three-cornered notes showered upon him by the fine ladies who grow romantic upon any kind of celebrity ; or the carefully-sealed envelopes, containing letters from fair anonymas, who asked if he had a heart, and would be in such a place in the Park at such an hour. What there was in Kenelm Chillingly that should make him thus favoured, especially by the fair sex, it would be difficult to say, unless it was the twofold reputation of being unlike other people, and of being unaffectedly indifferent to the gain of any reputation at all. He might, had he

so pleased, have easily established a proof that the prevalent though vague belief in his talents was not altogether unjustified. For the articles he had sent from abroad to 'The Londoner,' and by which his travelling expenses were defrayed, had been stamped by that sort of originality in tone and treatment which rarely fails to excite curiosity as to the author, and meets with more general praise than perhaps it deserves.

But Mivers was true to his contract to preserve inviolable the incognito of the author, and Kenelm regarded with profound contempt the articles themselves, and the readers who praised them.

Just as misanthropy with some persons grows out of benevolence disappointed, so there are certain natures—and Kenelm Chillingly's was perhaps one of them—in which indifferentism grows out of earnestness baffled.

He had promised himself pleasure in renewing acquaintance with his old tutor, Mr Welby—pleasure in refreshing his own

taste for metaphysics and casuistry and criticism. But that accomplished professor of realism had retired from philosophy altogether, and was now enjoying a holiday for life in the business of a public office. A Minister in favour of whom, when in opposition, Mr Welby, in a moment of whim, wrote some very able articles in a leading journal, had, on acceding to power, presented the realist with one of those few good things still left to Ministerial patronage—a place worth about £1200 a-year. His mornings thus engaged in routine work, Mr Welby enjoyed his evenings in a convivial way.

“*Inveni portum*,” he said to Kenelm; “I plunge into no troubled waters now. But come and dine with me to-morrow, *tête-à-tête*. My wife is at St Leonard’s with my youngest born for the benefit of sea-air.” Kenelm accepted the invitation.

The dinner would have contented a Brillat-Savarin—it was faultless; and the claret was that rare nectar, the Lafitte of 1848.

"I never share this," said Welby, "with more than one friend at a time."

Kenelm sought to engage his host in discussion on certain new works in vogue, and which were composed according to purely realistic canons of criticism. "The more realistic these books pretend to be, the less real they are," said Kenelm. "I am half inclined to think that the whole school you so systematically sought to build up is a mistake, and that realism in art is a thing impossible."

"I daresay you are right. I took up that school in earnest because I was in a passion with pretenders to the Idealistic school; and whatever one takes up in earnest is generally a mistake, especially if one is in a passion. I was not in earnest and I was not in a passion when I wrote those articles to which I am indebted for my office." Mr Welby here luxuriously stretched his limbs, and lifting his glass to his lips, voluptuously inhaled its *bouquet*.

"You sadden me," returned Kenelm.

"It is a melancholy thing to find that one's mind was influenced in youth by a teacher who mocks at his own teachings."

Welby shrugged his shoulders. "Life consists in the alternate process of learning and unlearning ; but it is often wiser to unlearn than to learn. For the rest, as I have ceased to be a critic, I care little whether I was wrong or right when I played that part. I think I am right now as a place-man. Let the world go its own way, provided the world lets you live upon it. I drain my wine to the lees, and cut down hope to the brief span of life. Reject realism in art if you please, and accept realism in conduct. For the first time in my life I am comfortable : my mind having worn out its walking-shoes, is now enjoying the luxury of slippers. Who can deny the realism of comfort ?"

"Has a man a right," Kenelm said to himself, as he entered his brougham, "to employ all the brilliancy of a rare wit—all the acquisitions of as rare a scholarship—to

the scaring of the young generation out of the safe old roads which youth left to itself would take—old roads skirted by romantic rivers and bowery trees—directing them into new paths on long sandy flats, and then, when they are faint and footsore, to tell them that he cares not a pin whether they have worn out their shoes in right paths or wrong paths, for that he has attained the *summum bonum* of philosophy in the comfort of easy slippers ?”

Before he could answer the question he thus put to himself, his brougham stopped at the door of the Minister whom Welby had contributed to bring into power.

That night there was a crowded muster of the fashionable world at the great man's house. It happened to be a very critical moment for the Minister. The fate of his Cabinet depended on the result of a motion about to be made the following week in the House of Commons. The great man stood at the entrance of the apartments to receive his guests, and among the guests were the

framers of the hostile motion and the leaders of the Opposition. His smile was not less gracious to them than to his dearest friends and staunchest supporters.

"I suppose this is realism," said Kenelm to himself; "but it is not truth, and it is not comfort." Leaning against the wall near the doorway, he contemplated with grave interest the striking countenance of his distinguished host. He detected beneath that courteous smile and that urbane manner the signs of care. The eye was absent, the cheek pinched, the brow furrowed. Kenelm turned away his looks, and glanced over the animated countenances of the idle loungers along commoner thoroughfares in life. Their eyes were not absent, their brows were not furrowed; their minds seemed quite at home in exchanging nothings. Interest many of them had in the approaching struggle, but it was much such an interest as betters of small sums may have on the Derby day—just enough to give piquancy to the race; nothing

to make gain a great joy, or loss a keen anguish.

"Our host is looking ill," said Mivers, accosting Kenelm. "I detect symptoms of suppressed gout. You know my aphorism, 'nothing so gouty as ambition,' especially Parliamentary ambition."

"You are not one of those friends who press on my choice of life that source of disease; allow me to thank you."

"Your thanks are misplaced. I strongly advise you to devote yourself to a political career."

"Despite the gout?"

"Despite the gout. If you could take the world as I do, my advice might be different. But your mind is overcrowded with doubts and fantasies and crotchets, and you have no choice but to give them vent in active life."

"You had something to do in making me what I am—an idler; something to answer for as to my doubts, fantasies, and crotchets. It was by your recommendation that

I was placed under the tuition of Mr Welby, and at that critical age in which the bent of the twig forms the shape of the tree."

"And I pride myself on that counsel. I repeat the reasons for which I gave it: it is an incalculable advantage for a young man to start in life thoroughly initiated into the New Ideas which will more or less influence his generation. Welby was the ablest representative of these ideas. It is a wondrous good fortune when the propagandist of the New Ideas is something more than a bookish philosopher—when he is a thorough 'man of the world,' and is what we emphatically call 'practical.' Yes, you owe me much that I secured to you such tuition, and saved you from twaddle and sentiment, the poetry of Wordsworth and the muscular Christianity of cousin John."

"What you say that you saved me from might have done me more good than all you conferred on me. I suspect that when education succeeds in placing an old head upon young shoulders, the combination is not

healthful—it clogs the blood and slackens the pulse. However, I must not be ungrateful ; you meant kindly. Yes, I suppose Welby is practical ; he has no belief, and he has got a place. But our host, I presume, is also practical ; his place is a much higher one than Welby's, and yet he surely is not without belief ? ”

“ He was born before the new ideas came into practical force ; but in proportion as they have done so, his beliefs have necessarily disappeared. I don't suppose that he believes in much now, except the two propositions : firstly, that if he accept the new ideas, he will have power and keep it, and if he does not accept them, power is out of the question ; and secondly, that if the new ideas are to prevail, he is the best man to direct them safely,—beliefs quite enough for a Minister. No wise Minister should have more.”

“ Does he not believe that the motion he is to resist next week is a bad one ? ”

“ A bad one of course, in its consequences, for if it succeed it will upset him ; a good

one in itself I am sure he must think it, for he would bring it on himself if he were in opposition."

"I see that Pope's definition is still true, 'Party is the madness of the many for the gain of the few.'"

"No, it is not true. Madness is a wrong word applied to the many; the many are sane enough—they know their own objects, and they make use of the intellect of the few in order to gain their objects. In each party it is the many that control the few who nominally lead them. A man becomes Prime Minister because he seems to the many of his party the fittest person to carry out their views. If he presume to differ from these views, they put him into a moral pillory, and pelt him with their dirtiest stones and their rottenest eggs."

"Then the maxim should be reversed and party is rather the madness of the few for the gain of the many?"

"Of the two, that is the more correct definition."

“Let me keep my senses and decline to be one of the few.”

Kenelm moved away from his cousin's side, and entering one of the less crowded rooms, saw Cecilia Travers seated there in a recess with Lady Glenalvon. He joined them, and after a brief interchange of a few commonplaces, Lady Glenalvon quitted her post to accost a foreign ambassadress, and Kenelm sank into the chair she vacated.

It was a relief to his eye to contemplate Cecilia's candid brow; to his ear to hearken to the soft voice that had no artificial tones, and uttered no cynical witticisms.

“Don't you think it strange,” said Kenelm, “that we English should so mould all our habits as to make even what we call pleasure as little pleasurable as possible? We are now in the beginning of June, the fresh outburst of summer, when every day in the country is a delight to eye and ear, and we say, ‘the season for hot rooms is beginning.’ We alone of civilised races spend our summer in a capital, and cling to the country

when the trees are leafless and the brooks frozen."

"Certainly that is a mistake ; but I love the country in all seasons, even in winter."

"Provided the country house is full of London people ?"

"No ; that is rather a drawback. I never want companions in the country."

"True ; I should have remembered that you differ from young ladies in general, and make companions of books. They are always more conversible in the country than they are in town ; or rather, we listen there to them with less distracted attention. Ha ! do I not recognise yonder the fair whiskers of George Belvoir ? Who is the lady leaning on his arm ?"

"Don't you know ?—Lady Emily Belvoir, his wife."

"Ah ! I was told that he had married. The lady is handsome. She will become the family diamonds. Does she read Blue-books ?"

"I will ask her if you wish."

"Nay, it is scarcely worth while. During my rambles abroad, I saw but few English newspapers. I did, however, learn that George had won his election. Has he yet spoken in Parliament?"

"Yes; he moved the answer to the address this session, and was much complimented on the excellent tone and taste of his speech. He spoke again a few weeks afterwards, I fear not so successfully."

"Coughed down?"

"Something like it."

"Do him good; he will recover the cough, and fulfil my prophecy of his success."

"Have you done with poor George for the present? If so, allow me to ask whether you have quite forgotten Will Somers and Jessie Wiles?"

"Forgotten them! no."

"But you have never asked after them?"

"I took it for granted that they were as happy as could be expected. Pray assure me that they are."

"I trust so now ; but they have had trouble, and have left Graveleigh."

"Trouble ! left Graveleigh ! You make me uneasy. Pray explain."

"They had not been three months married and installed in the home they owed to you, when poor Will was seized with a rheumatic fever. He was confined to his bed for many weeks ; and when at last he could move from it, was so weak as to be still unable to do any work. During his illness Jessie had no heart and little leisure to attend to the shop. Of course I—that is, my dear father—gave them all necessary assistance ; but——"

"I understand ; they were reduced to objects of charity. Brute that I am, never to have thought of the duties I owed to the couple I had brought together. But pray go on."

"You are aware that just before you left us my father received a proposal to exchange his property at Graveleigh for some lands more desirable to him ?"

"I remember. He closed with that offer."

"Yes ; Captain Stavers, the new landlord of Graveleigh, seems to be a very bad man ; and though he could not turn the Somerses out of the cottage so long as they paid rent—which we took care they did pay—yet out of a very wicked spite he set up a rival shop in one of his other cottages in the village, and it became impossible for these poor young people to get a livelihood at Graveleigh."


"What excuse for spite against so harmless a young couple could Captain Stavers find or invent ?"

Cecilia looked down and coloured. "It was a revengeful feeling against Jessie."

"Ah ! I comprehend."

"But they have now left the village, and are happily settled elsewhere. Will has recovered his health, and they are prospering—much more than they could ever have done at Graveleigh."

"In that change you were their benefactress, Miss Travers ?" said Kenelm, in a more tender voice and with a softer eye



than he had ever before evinced towards the heiress.

"No, it is not I whom they have to thank and bless.

"Who, then, is it? Your father?"

"No. Do not question me; I am bound not to say. They do not themselves know; they rather believe that their gratitude is due to you."

"To me! Am I to be for ever a sham in spite of myself? My dear Miss Travers, it is essential to my honour that I should undeceive this credulous pair; where can I find them?"

"I must not say; but I will ask permission of their concealed benefactor, and send you their address."

A touch was laid on Kenelm's arm, and a voice whispered—"May I ask you to present me to Miss Travers?"

"Miss Travers," said Kenelm, "I entreat you to add to the list of your acquaintances a cousin of mine—Mr Chillingly Gordon."

While Gordon addressed to Cecilia the well-bred conventionalisms with which ac-

quaintance in London drawing-rooms usually commences, Kenelm, obedient to a sign from Lady Glenalvon, who had just re-entered the room, quitted his seat, and joined the Marchioness.

"Is not that young man whom you left talking with Miss Travers your clever cousin Gordon?"

"The same."

"She is listening to him with great attention. How his face brightens up as he talks! He is positively handsome, thus animated."

"Yes, I could fancy him a dangerous wooer. He has wit, and liveliness, and audacity; he could be very much in love with a great fortune, and talk to the owner of it with a fervour rarely exhibited by a Chillingly. Well, it is no affair of mine."

"It ought to be."

"Alas and alas! that 'ought to be;' what depths of sorrowful meaning lie within that simple phrase! How happy would be our lives, how grand our actions, how pure our souls, if all could be with us as it ought to be!"

CHAPTER VIII.

WE often form cordial intimacies in the confined society of a country house, or a quiet watering-place, or a small Continental town, which fade away into remote acquaintanceship in the mighty vortex of London life, neither party being to blame for the estrangement. It was so with Leopold Travers and Kenelm Chillingly. Travers, as we have seen, had felt a powerful charm in the converse of the young stranger, so in contrast with the routine of the rural companionships to which his alert intellect had for many years circumscribed its range. But, on reappearing in London the season before Kenelm again met him, he had renewed old friendships with men of his own standing,—officers in the regiment of which he had once been a

popular ornament, some of them still unmarried, a few of them like himself, widowed ; others who had been his rivals in fashion, and were still pleasant idlers about town ; and it rarely happens in a metropolis that we have intimate friendships with those of another generation, unless there be some common tie in the cultivation of art and letters, or the action of kindred sympathies in the party strife of politics. Therefore Travers and Kenelm had had little familiar communication with each other since they first met at the Beaumanoirs'. Now and then they found themselves at the same crowded assemblies, and interchanged nods and salutations. But their habits were different. The houses at which they were intimate were not the same ; neither did they frequent the same clubs. Kenelm's chief bodily exercise was still that of long and early rambles into rural suburbs ; Leopold's was that of a late ride in the Row. Of the two, Leopold was much more the man of pleasure. Once restored to metropolitan life, a temper constitutionally eager, ardent,

and convivial, took kindly, as in earlier youth, to its light range of enjoyments.

Had the intercourse between the two men been as frankly familiar as it had been at Neesdale Park, Kenelm would probably have seen much more of Cecilia at her own home ; and the admiration and esteem with which she already inspired him might have ripened into much warmer feeling, had he thus been brought into clearer comprehension of the soft and womanly heart, and its tender predisposition towards himself.

He had said somewhat vaguely in his letter to Sir Peter that "sometimes he felt as if his indifference to love, as to ambition, was because he had some impossible ideal in each." Taking that conjecture to task, he could not honestly persuade himself that he had formed any ideal of woman and wife with which the reality of Cecilia Travers was at war. On the contrary, the more he thought over the characteristics of Cecilia, the more they seemed to correspond to any ideal that had floated before him in the

twilight of dreamy reverie, and yet he knew that he was not in love with her, that his heart did not respond to his reason. And mournfully he resigned himself to the conviction that nowhere in this planet, from the normal pursuits of whose inhabitants he felt so estranged, was there waiting for him the smiling playmate, the earnest helpmate. As this conviction strengthened, so an increased weariness of the artificial life of the metropolis, and of all its objects and amusements, turned his thoughts with an intense yearning towards the Bohemian freedom and fresh excitements of his foot ramblings. He often thought with envy of the wandering minstrel, and wondered whether, if he again traversed the same range of country, he might encounter again that vagrant singer.

CHAPTER IX.

It is nearly a week since Kenelm had met Cecilia, and he is sitting in his rooms with Lord Thetford at that hour of three in the afternoon which is found the most difficult to dispose of by idlers about town. Amongst young men of his own age and class with whom Kenelm assorted in the fashionable world, perhaps the one whom he liked the best, and of whom he saw the most, was this young heir of the Beaumanoirs ; and though Lord Thetford has nothing to do with the direct stream of my story, it is worth pausing a few minutes to sketch an outline of one of the best whom the last generation has produced for a part that, owing to accidents of birth and fortune, young men like Lord Thetford must play on that stage

from which the curtain is not yet drawn up. Destined to be the head of a family that unites with princely possessions and an historical name a keen though honourable ambition for political power, Lord Thetford has been carefully educated, especially in the new ideas of his time. His father, though a man of no ordinary talents, has never taken a prominent part in public life. He desires his eldest son to do so. The Beaumanoirs have been Whigs from the time of William III. They have shared the good and the ill fortunes of a party which, whether we side with it or not, no politician who dreads extremes in the government of a State so pre-eminently artificial that a prevalent extreme at either end of the balance would be fatal to equilibrium, can desire to become extinct or feeble so long as a constitutional monarchy exists in England. From the reign of George I. to the death of George IV., the Beaumanoirs were in the ascendant. Visit their family portrait gallery, and you must admire the eminence

of a house which, during that interval of less than a century, contributed so many men to the service of the State or the adornment of the Court—so many Ministers, Ambassadors, Generals, Lord Chamberlains, and Masters of the Horse. When the younger Pitt beat the great Whig Houses, the Beaumanoirs vanish into comparative obscurity ; they re-emerge with the accession of William IV., and once more produce bulwarks of the State and ornaments of the Crown. The present Lord of Beaumanoir, *poco curante* in politics though he be, has at least held high offices at Court ; and, as a matter of course, he is Lord Lieutenant of his county, as well as Knight of the Garter. He is a man whom the chiefs of his party have been accustomed to consult on critical questions. He gives his opinions confidentially and modestly, and when they are rejected never takes offence. He thinks that a time is coming when the head of the Beaumanoirs should descend into the lists and fight hand-to-hand with any Hodge or Hobson in the

cause of his country for the benefit of the Whigs. Too lazy or too old to do this himself, he says to his son, "You must do it : without effort of mine the thing may last my life. It needs effort of yours that the thing may last through your own."

Lord Thetford cheerfully responds to the paternal admonition. He curbs his natural inclinations, which are neither inelegant nor unmanly ; for, on the one side, he is very fond of music and painting, an accomplished amateur, and deemed a sound connoisseur in both ; and, on the other side, he has a passion for all field sports, and especially for hunting. He allows no such attractions to interfere with diligent attention to the business of the House of Commons. He serves in Committees, he takes the chair at public meetings on sanitary questions, or projects for social improvement, and acquits himself well therein. He has not yet spoken in debate, but he has been only two years in Parliament, and he takes his father's wise advice not to speak till the third. But he is not without

weight among the well-born youth of the party, and has in him the stuff out of which, when it becomes seasoned, the Corinthian capitals of a Cabinet may be very effectively carved. In his own heart he is convinced that his party are going too far and too fast ; but with that party he goes on light-heartedly, and would continue to do so if they went to Erebus. But he would prefer their going the other way. For the rest, a pleasant bright-eyed young fellow, with vivid animal spirits ; and, in the holiday moments of reprieve from public duty, he brings sunshine into draggling hunting-fields, and a fresh breeze into heated ball-rooms.

“ My dear fellow,” said Lord Thetford, as he threw aside his cigar, “ I quite understand that you bore yourself—you have nothing else to do.”

“ What can I do ? ”

“ Work.”

“ Work ! ”

“ Yes, you are clever enough to feel that you have a mind ; and mind is a restless inmate of body—it craves occupation of some

sort, and regular occupation too ; it needs its daily constitutional exercise. Do you give your mind that ? ”

“ I am sure I don’t know, but my mind is always busying itself about something or other.”

“ In a desultory way — with no fixed object.”

“ True.”

“ Write a book, and then it will have its constitutional.”

“ Nay, my mind is always writing a book (though it may not publish one), always jotting down impressions, or inventing incidents, or investigating characters ; and between you and me, I do not think that I do bore myself so much as I did formerly. Other people bore me more than they did.”

“ Because you will not create an object in common with other people : come into Parliament, side with a party, and you have that object.”

“ Do you mean seriously to tell me that you are not bored in the House of Commons ? ”

"With the speakers very often, yes; but with the strife between the speakers, no. The House of Commons life has a peculiar excitement scarcely understood out of it; but you may conceive its charm when you observe that a man who has once been in the thick of it feels forlorn and shelved if he lose his seat, and even repines when the accident of birth transfers him to the serener air of the Upper House. Try that life, Chillingly."

"I might if I were an ultra-Radical, a Republican, a Communist, a Socialist, and wished to upset everything existing, for then the strife would at least be a very earnest one."

"But could not you be equally in earnest against those revolutionary gentlemen?"

"Are you and your leaders in earnest against them? They don't appear to me so."

Thetford was silent for a minute. "Well, if you doubt the principles of my side, go with the other side. For my part, I and many of our party would be glad to see the Conservatives stronger."

"I have no doubt they would. No sensible man likes to be carried off his legs by the rush of the crowd behind him ; and a crowd is less headlong when it sees a strong force arrayed against it in front. But it seems to me that, at present, Conservatism can but be what it now is—a party that may combine for resistance, and will not combine for inventive construction. We are living in an age in which the process of unsettlement is going blindly at work, as if impelled by a Nemesis as blind as itself. New ideas come beating in surf and surge against those which former reasoners had considered as fixed banks and breakwaters ; and the new ideas are so mutable, so fickle, that those which were considered novel ten years ago are deemed obsolete to-day, and the new ones of to-day will in their turn be obsolete to-morrow. And, in a sort of fatalism, you see statesmen yielding way to these successive mockeries of experiment—for they are experiments against experience — and saying to each other with a shrug of the

shoulders, 'Bismillah, it must be so; the country will have it, even though it sends the country to the dogs.' I don't feel sure that the country will not go there the sooner, if you can only strengthen the Conservative element enough to set it up in office, with the certainty of knocking it down again. Alas! I am too dispassionate a looker-on to be fit for a partisan; would I were not. Address yourself to my cousin Gordon."

"Ay, Chillingly Gordon is a coming man, and has all the earnestness you find absent in party and in yourself."

"You call him earnest?"

"Thoroughly, in the pursuit of one object—the advancement of Chillingly Gordon. If he get into the House of Commons, and succeed there, I hope he will never become my leader; for if he thought Christianity in the way of his promotion, he would bring in a bill for its abolition."

"In that case would he still be your leader?"

"My dear Kenelm, you don't know what

is the spirit of party, and how easily it makes excuses for any act of its leader. Of course, if Gordon brought in a bill for the abolition of Christianity, it would be on the plea that the abolition was good for the Christians, and his followers would cheer that enlightened sentiment."

"Ah," said Kenelm, with a sigh, "I own myself the dullest of blockheads; for instead of tempting me into the field of party politics, your talk leaves me in stolid amaze that you do not take to your heels, where honour can only be saved by flight."

"Pooh! my dear Chillingly, we cannot run away from the age in which we live—we must accept its conditions and make the best of them; and if the House of Commons be nothing else, it is a famous debating society and a capital club. Think over it. I must leave you now. I am going to see a picture at the Exhibition which has been most truculently criticised in 'The Londoner,' but which I am assured, on good authority, is a work of remarkable merit. I can't bear

to see a man snarled and sneered down, no doubt by jealous rivals, who have their influence in journals, so I shall judge of the picture for myself. If it be really as good as I am told, I shall talk about it to everybody I meet—and in matters of art I fancy my word goes for something. Study art, my dear Kenelm. No gentleman's education is complete if he don't know a good picture from a bad one. After the Exhibition I shall just have time for a canter round the Park before the debate of the session, which begins to-night."

With a light step the young man quitted the room, humming an air from the 'Figaro' as he descended the stairs. From the window Kenelm watched him swinging himself with careless grace into his saddle and riding briskly down the street—in form and face and bearing, a very model of young, high-born, high-bred manhood. "The Venetians," muttered Kenelm, "decapitated Marino Faliero for conspiring against his own order—the nobles. The Venetians loved their institu-

tions, and had faith in them. Is there such love and such faith among the English ?”

As he thus soliloquised he heard a shrilling sort of squeak ; and a showman stationed before his window the stage on which Punch satirises the laws and moralities of the world, “kills the beadle and defies the devil.”

CHAPTER X.

KENELM turned from the sight of Punch and Punch's friend the cur, as his servant, entering, said, "A person from the country, who would not give his name, asked to see him."

Thinking it might be some message from his father, Kenelm ordered the stranger to be admitted, and in another minute there entered a young man of handsome countenance and powerful frame, in whom, after a surprised stare, Kenelm recognised Tom Bowles. Difficult indeed would have been that recognition to an unobservant beholder: no trace was left of the sullen bully or the village farrier; the expression of the face was mild and intelligent—more bashful than hardy; the brute strength of the form had lost its

former clumsiness, the simple dress was that of a gentleman—to use an expressive idiom, the whole man was wonderfully “toned down.”

“I am afraid, sir, I am taking a liberty,” said Tom, rather nervously, twiddling his hat between his fingers.

“I should be a greater friend to liberty than I am if it were always taken in the same way,” said Kenelm, with a touch of his saturnine humour; but then yielding at once to the warmer impulse of his nature, he grasped his old antagonist’s hand and exclaimed, “My dear Tom, you are so welcome. I am so glad to see you. Sit down, man—sit down; make yourself at home.”

“I did not know you were back in England, sir, till within the last few days; for you did say that when you came back I should see or hear from you,” and there was a tone of reproach in the last words.

“I am to blame, forgive me,” said Kenelm, remorsefully. “But how did you find me out? you did not then, I think, even know

my name. That, however, it was easy enough to discover ; but who gave you my address in this lodging ?”

“ Well, sir, it was Miss Travers ; and she bade me come to you. Otherwise, as you did not send for me, it was scarcely my place to call uninvited.”

“ But, my dear Tom, I never dreamed that you were in London. One don’t ask a man whom one supposes to be more than a hundred miles off to pay one an afternoon call. You are still with your uncle, I presume ? And I need not ask if all thrives well with you—you look a prosperous man, every inch of you, from crown to toe.”

“ Yes,” said Tom ; “ thank you kindly, sir, I am doing well in the way of business, and my uncle is to give me up the whole concern at Christmas.”

While Tom thus spoke Kenelm had summoned his servant, and ordered up such refreshments as could be found in the larder of a bachelor in lodgings. “ And what brings you to town, Tom ? ”

“Miss Travers wrote to me about a little business which she was good enough to manage for me, and said you wished to know about it ; and so, after turning it over in my mind for a few days, I resolved to come to town : indeed,” added Tom, heartily, “I did wish to see your face again.”

“But you talk riddles. What business of yours could Miss Travers imagine I wished to know about ?”

Tom coloured high, and looked very embarrassed. Luckily the servant here entering with the refreshment-tray, allowed him time to recover himself. Kenelm helped him to a liberal slice of cold pigeon-pie, pressed wine on him, and did not renew the subject till he thought his guest's tongue was likely to be more freely set loose ; then he said, laying a friendly hand on Tom's shoulder, “I have been thinking over what passed between me and Miss Travers. I wished to have the new address of Will Somers ; she promised to write to his benefactor to ask permission to give it. You are that benefactor ?”

“Don’t say benefactor, sir. I will tell you how it came about if you will let me. You see, I sold my little place at Graveleigh to the new Squire, and when mother removed to Luscombe to be near me, she told me how poor Jessie had been annoyed by Captain Stavers, who seems to think his purchase included the young women on the property along with the standing timber; and I was half afraid that she had given some cause for his persecution, for you know she has a blink of those soft eyes of hers that might charm a wise man out of his skin, and put a fool there instead.”

“But I hope she has done with those blinks since her marriage.”

“Well, and I honestly think she has. It is certain she did not encourage Captain Stavers, for I went over to Graveleigh myself on the sly, and lodged concealed with one of the cottagers who owed me a kindness; and one day, as I was at watch, I saw the Captain peering over the stile which divides Holm-

wood from the glebe—you remember Holmwood ?”

“I can’t say I do.”

“The footway from the village to Squire Travers’s goes through the wood, which is a few hundred yards at the back of Will Somers’s orchard. Presently the Captain drew himself suddenly back from the stile, and disappeared among the trees, and then I saw Jessie coming from the orchard with a basket over her arm, and walking quick towards the wood. Then, sir, my heart sank. I felt sure she was going to meet the Captain. However, I crept along the hedgerow, hiding myself, and got into the wood almost as soon as Jessie got there, by another way. Under the cover of the brushwood I stole on till I saw the Captain come out from the copse on the other side of the path, and plant himself just before Jessie. Then I saw at once I had wronged her. She had not expected to see him, for she hastily turned back, and began to run homeward ; but he caught her up,

and seized her by the arm. I could not hear what he said, but I heard her voice quite sharp with fright and anger. And then he suddenly seized her round the waist, and she screamed, and I sprang forward——”

“And thrashed the Captain?”

“No, I did not,” said Tom; “I had made a vow to myself that I never would be violent again if I could help it. So I took him with one hand by the cuff of the neck, and with the other by the waistband, and just pitched him on a bramble-bush—quite mildly. He soon picked himself up, for he is a dapper little chap, and became very blustering and abusive. But I kept my temper, and said civilly, ‘Little gentleman, hard words break no bones; but if ever you molest Mrs Somers again, I will carry you into her orchard, souse you into the duck-pond there, and call all the villagers to see you scramble out of it again; and I will do it now if you are not off. I daresay you have heard of my name—I am Tom Bowles.’ Upon that, his face,

which was before very red, grew very white, and muttering something I did not hear, he walked away.

“Jessie—I mean Mrs Somers—seemed at first as much frightened at me as she had been at the Captain ; and though I offered to walk with her to Miss Travers’s, where she was going with a basket which the young lady had ordered, she refused, and went back home. I felt hurt, and returned to my uncle’s the same evening ; and it was not for months that I heard the Captain had been spiteful enough to set up an opposition shop, and that poor Will had been taken ill, and his wife was confined about the same time, and the talk was that they were in distress, and might have to be sold up.

“When I heard all this, I thought that after all it was my rough tongue that had so angered the Captain and been the cause of his spite, and so it was my duty to make it up to poor Will and his wife. I did not know how to set about mending matters, but I

thought I'd go and talk to Miss Travers ; and if ever there was a kind heart in a girl's breast, hers is one."

"You are right there, I guess. What did Miss Travers say?"

"Nay ; I hardly know what she did say, but she set me thinking, and it struck me that Jessie—Mrs Somers—had better move to a distance, and out of the Captain's reach, and that Will would do better in a less out-of-the-way place. And then, by good luck, I read in the newspaper that a stationery and fancy-work business, with a circulating library, was to be sold on moderate terms at Moleswich, the other side of London. So I took the train and went to the place, and thought the shop would just suit these young folks, and not be too much work for either ; then I went to Miss Travers, and I had a lot of money lying by me from the sale of the old forge and premises, which I did not know what to do with ; and so, to cut short a long story, I bought the business, and

Will and his wife are settled at Moleswich, thriving and happy, I hope, sir."

Tom's voice quivered at the last words, and he turned aside quickly, passing his hand over his eyes.

Kenelm was greatly moved.

"And they don't know what you did for them?"

"To be sure not. I don't think Will would have let himself be beholden to me. Ah! the lad has a spirit of his own, and Jessie—Mrs Somers—would have felt pained and humbled that I should even think of such a thing. Miss Travers managed it all. They take the money as a loan which is to be paid by instalments. They have sent Miss Travers more than one instalment already, so I know they are doing well."

"A loan from Miss Travers?"

"No; Miss Travers wanted to have a share in it, but I begged her not. It made me happy to do what I did all myself; and Miss Travers felt for me and did not press. They perhaps think it is Squire Travers

(though he is not a man who would like to say it, for fear it should bring applicants on him), or some other gentleman who takes an interest in them."

"I always said you were a grand fellow, Tom. But you are grander still than I thought you."

"If there be any good in me, I owe it to you, sir. Think what a drunken, violent brute I was when I first met you. Those walks with you, and I may say that other gentleman's talk, and then that long kind letter I had from you, not signed in your name, and written from abroad—all these changed me, as the child is changed at nurse."

"You have evidently read a good deal since we parted."

"Yes; I belong to our young men's library and institute; and when of an evening I get hold of a book, especially a pleasant story-book, I don't care for other company."

"Have you never seen any other girl you could care for, and wish to marry?"

"Ah, sir," answered Tom, "a man does

not go so mad for a girl as I did for Jessie Wiles, and when it is all over, and he has come to his senses, put his heart into joint again as easily as if it were only a broken leg. I don't say that I may not live to love and to marry another woman—it is my wish to do so. But I know that I shall love Jessie to my dying day; but not sinfully, sir—not sinfully. I would not wrong her by a thought."

There was a long pause.

At last Kenelm said—"You promised to be kind to that little girl with the flower-ball; what has become of her?"

"She is quite well, thank you, sir. My aunt has taken a great fancy to her, and so has my mother. She comes to them very often of an evening, and brings her work with her. A quick, intelligent little thing, and full of pretty thoughts. On Sundays, if the weather is fine, we stroll out together in the fields."

"She has been a comfort to you, Tom."

"Oh yes."

“And loves you?”

“I am sure she does; an affectionate, grateful child.”

“She will be a woman soon, Tom, and may love you as a woman then.”

Tom looked indignant and rather scornful at that suggestion, and hastened to revert to the subject more immediately at his heart.

“Miss Travers said you would like to call on Will Somers and his wife; will you? Moleswich is not far from London, you know.”

“Certainly, I will call.”

“I do hope you will find them happy; and if so, perhaps you will kindly let me know; and—and—I wonder whether Jessie’s child is like her? It is a boy—somehow or other I would rather it had been a girl.”

“I will write you full particulars. But why not come with me?”

“No, I don’t think I could do that, just at present. It unsettled me sadly when I did again see her sweet face at Graveleigh,

and she was still afraid of me too!—that was a sharp pang.”

“She ought to know what you have done for her, and will.”

“On no account, sir; promise me that. I should feel mean if I humbled them—that way.”

“I understand, though I will not as yet make you any positive promise. Meanwhile, if you are staying in town, lodge with me; my landlady can find you a room.”

“Thank you heartily, sir; but I go back by the evening train; and, bless me! how late it is now! I must wish you good-bye. I have some commissions to do for my aunt, and I must buy a new doll for Susey.”

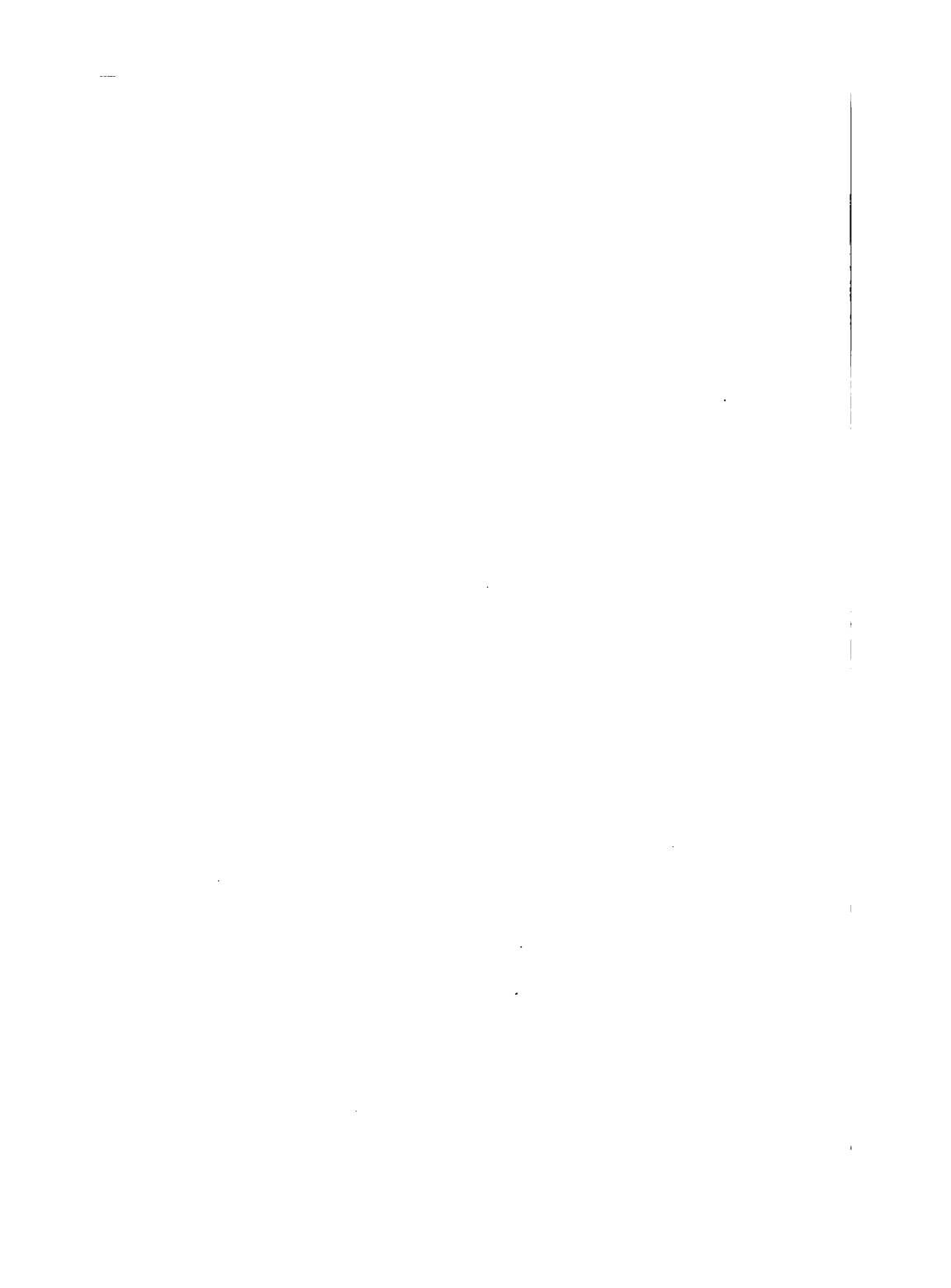
“Susey is the name of the little girl with the flower-ball?”

“Yes. I must run off now; I feel quite light at heart seeing you again and finding that you receive me still so kindly, as if we were equals.”

“Ah, Tom, I wish I was your equal—nay, half as noble as heaven has made you!”

Tom laughed incredulously, and went his way.

"This mischievous passion of love," said Kenelm to himself, "has its good side, it seems, after all. If it was nearly making a wild beast of that brave fellow—nay, worse than wild beast, a homicide doomed to the gibbet—so, on the other hand, what a refined, delicate, chivalrous nature of gentleman it has developed out of the stormy elements of its first madness. Yes, I will go and look at this new-married couple. I dare say they are already snarling and spitting at each other like cat and dog. Moleswich is within reach of a walk."



BOOK V.

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BOOK V.—CHAPTER I.

Two days after the interview recorded in the last chapter of the previous Book, Travers, chancing to call at Kenelm's lodgings, was told by his servant that Mr Chillingly had left London, alone, and had given no orders as to forwarding letters. The servant did not know where he had gone, or when he would return.

Travers repeated this news incidentally to Cecilia, and she felt somewhat hurt that he had not written her a line respecting Tom's visit. She, however, guessed that he had gone to see the Somerses, and would return to town in a day or so. But weeks passed, the season drew to its close, and of Kenelm Chillingly she saw or heard nothing : he had wholly vanished from the London world.

He had but written a line to his servant, ordering him to repair to Exmundham and await him there, and enclosing him a cheque to pay outstanding bills.

We must now follow the devious steps of the strange being who has grown into the hero of this story. He had left his apartment at daybreak long before his servant was up, with his knapsack, and a small portmanteau, into which he had thrust—besides such additional articles of dress as he thought he might possibly require, and which his knapsack could not contain—a few of his favourite books. Driving with these in a hack-cab to the Vauxhall station, he directed the portmanteau to be forwarded to Moleswich, and flinging the knapsack on his shoulders, walked slowly along the drowsy suburbs that stretched far into the landscape, before, breathing more freely, he found some evidences of rural culture on either side of the highroad. It was not, however, till he had left the roofs and trees of pleasant Richmond far behind him that he began to feel he was out of reach

of the metropolitan disquieting influences. Finding at a little inn, where he stopped to breakfast, that there was a path along fields, and in sight of the river, through which he could gain the place of his destination, he then quitted the highroad, and, traversing one of the loveliest districts in one of our loveliest counties, he reached Moleswich about noon.

CHAPTER II.

ON entering the main street of the pretty town, the name of Somers, in gilt capitals, was sufficiently conspicuous over the door of a very imposing shop. It boasted two plate-glass windows, at one of which were tastefully exhibited various articles of fine stationery, embroidery patterns, &c. ; at the other, no less tastefully, sundry specimens of ornamental basket-work.

Kenelm crossed the threshold and recognised behind the counter—fair as ever, but with an expression of face more staid, and a figure more rounded and matron-like—his old friend Jessie. There were two or three customers before her, between whom she was dividing her attention. While a handsome young lady, seated, was saying, in a some-

what loud, but cheery and pleasant voice, "Do not mind me, Mrs Somers—I can wait," Jessie's quick eye darted towards the stranger, but too rapidly to distinguish his features, which, indeed, he turned away, and began to examine the baskets.

In a minute or so the other customers were served and had departed. And the voice of the lady was again heard—"Now, Mrs Somers, I want to see your picture-books and toys. I am giving a little children's party this afternoon, and I want to make them as happy as possible."

"Somewhere or other on this planet, or before my Monad was whisked away to it, I have heard that voice," muttered Kenelm. While Jessie was alertly bringing forth her toys and picture-books, she said, "I am sorry to keep you waiting, sir; but if it is the baskets you come about, I can call my husband."

"Do," said Kenelm.

"William—William," cried Mrs Somers; and after a delay long enough to allow him

to slip on his jacket, William Somers emerged from the back parlour.

His face had lost its old trace of suffering and ill health; it was still somewhat pale, and retained its expression of intellectual refinement.

“How you have improved in your art!” said Kenelm, heartily.

William started, and recognised Kenelm at once. He sprang forward and took Kenelm’s outstretched hand in both his own, and, in a voice between laughing and crying, exclaimed—“Jessie, Jessie, it is he!—he whom we pray for every night. God bless you!—God bless and make you as happy as He permitted you to make me!”

Before this little speech was faltered out, Jessie was by her husband’s side, and she added, in a lower voice, but tremulous with deep feeling—“And me too!”

“By your leave, Will,” said Kenelm, and he saluted Jessie’s white forehead with a kiss that could not have been kindlier or colder if it had been her grandfather’s.

Meanwhile the lady had risen noiselessly and unobserved, and stealing up to Kenelm, looked him full in the face.

"You have another friend here, sir, who has also some cause to thank you——"

"I thought I remembered your voice," said Kenelm, looking puzzled. "But pardon me if I cannot recall your features. Where have we met before?"

"Give me your arm when we go out, and I will bring myself to your recollection. But no: I must not hurry you away now. I will call again in half an hour. Mrs Somers, meanwhile put up the things I have selected. I will take them away with me when I come back from the vicarage, where I have left the pony-carriage." So, with a parting nod and smile to Kenelm, she turned away, and left him bewildered.

"But who is that lady, Will?"

"A Mrs Braefield. She is a new-comer."

"She may well be that, Will," said Jessie, smiling, "for she has only been married six months."

"And what was her name before she married?"

"I am sure I don't know, sir. It is only three months since we came here, and she has been very kind to us, and an excellent customer. Everybody likes her. Mr Braefield is a city gentleman, and very rich; and they live in the finest house in the place, and see a great deal of company."

"Well, I am no wiser than I was before," said Kenelm. "People who ask questions very seldom are."

"And how did you find us out, sir?" said Jessie. "Oh! I guess," she added, with an arch glance and smile. "Of course, you have seen Miss Travers, and she told you."

"You are right. I first learned your change of residence from her, and thought I would come and see you, and be introduced to the baby—a boy, I understand? Like you, Will?"

"No, sir—the picture of Jessie."

"Nonsense, Will; it is you all over, even to its little hands."

"And your good mother, Will, how did you leave her?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Jessie, reproachfully; "do you think we could have the heart to leave mother—so lone and rheumatic too? She is tending baby now—always does while I am in the shop."

Here Kenelm followed the young couple into the parlour, where, seated by the window, they found old Mrs Somers reading the Bible and rocking the baby, who slept peacefully in its cradle.

"Will," said Kenelm, bending his dark face over the infant, "I will tell you a pretty thought of a foreign poet's, which has been thus badly translated:—

"'Blest babe, a boundless world this bed so narrow
seems to thee;
Grow man, and narrower than this bed the boundless
world shall be.'" *

"I don't think that is true, sir," said Will, simply; "for a happy home is a world wide enough for any man."

* Schiller.

Tom started into Jessie's eyes: she bent down and kissed him on the brow—but the words ‘You made it’ She smiled, blushing. ‘I mean we made it’

Some few days while Tomkin talked with Tom and his old mother, for Jessie was a few weeks back in the shop; and Tomkin was surprised when he found the mother's heart all over it when over, and Jessie put her head in at the door and said ‘The Doctor is waiting for you’

‘Oh, Tom, Tom, I shall come and see you soon and my mother gives me a message to say I don't know how many good-byes to your mother’



CHAPTER III.

A SMART pony phaeton, with a box for a driver in livery equally smart, stood at the shop-door.

"Now, Mr Chillingly," said Mrs Braefield, "it is my turn to run away with you; get in!"

"Eh!" murmured Kenelm, gazing at her with large dreamy eyes. "Is it possible?"

"Quite possible; get in. Coachman, home! Yes, Mr Chillingly, you meet again that giddy creature whom you threatened to thrash; it would have served her right. I ought to feel so ashamed to recall myself to your recollection, and yet I am not a bit ashamed. I am proud to show you that I have turned out a steady, respectable woman, and, my husband tells me, a good wife."

"You have only been six months married, I hear," said Kenelm, drily. "I hope your husband will say the same six years hence."

"He will say the same sixty years hence, if we live as long."

"How old is he now?"

"Thirty-eight."

"When a man wants only two years of his hundredth, he probably has learned to know his own mind; but then, in most cases, very little mind is left to him to know."

"Don't be satirical, sir; and don't talk as if you were railing at marriage, when you have just left as happy a young couple as the sun ever shone upon; and owing—for Mrs Somers has told me all about her marriage—owing their happiness to you."

"Their happiness to me! not in the least. I helped them to marry, and in spite of marriage, they helped each other to be happy."

"You are still unmarried yourself?"

"Yes, thank Heaven!"

"And are you happy?"

"No; I can't make myself happy—myself is a discontented brute."

"Then why do you say 'thank Heaven'?"

"Because it is a comfort to think I am not making somebody else unhappy."

"Do you believe that if you loved a wife who loved you, you should make her unhappy?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I have not seen a woman whom I could love as a wife. And we need not push our inquiries further. What has become of that ill-treated grey cob?"

"He was quite well, thank you, when I last heard of him."

"And the uncle who would have inflicted me upon you, if you had not so gallantly defended yourself?"

"He is living where he did live, and has married his housekeeper. He felt a delicate scruple against taking that step till I was married myself, and out of the way."

Here Mrs Braefield, beginning to speak

very hurriedly, as women who seek to disguise emotion often do, informed Kenelm how unhappy she had felt for weeks after having found an asylum with her aunt—how she had been stung by remorse and oppressed by a sense of humiliation at the thought of her folly and the odious recollection of Mr Compton—how she had declared to herself that she would never marry any one now—never ! How Mr Braefield happened to be on a visit in the neighbourhood, and saw her at church—how he had sought an introduction to her—and how at first she rather disliked him than not ; but he was so good and so kind, and when at last he proposed—and she had frankly told him all about her girlish flight and infatuation—how generously he had thanked her for a candour which had placed her as high in his esteem as she had been before in his love. “And from that moment,” said Mrs Braefield, passionately, “my whole heart leapt to him. And now you know all. And here we are at the Lodge.”

The pony-phaeton went with great speed up a broad gravel-drive, bordered with rare evergreens, and stopped at a handsome house with a portico in front, and a long conservatory at the garden side—one of those houses which belong to “city gentlemen,” and often contain more comfort and exhibit more luxury than many a stately manorial mansion.

Mrs Braefield evidently felt some pride as she led Kenelm through the handsome hall, paved with Malvern tiles and adorned with Scagliola columns, and into a drawing-room furnished with much taste, and opening on a spacious flower-garden.

“But where is Mr Braefield?” asked Kenelm.

“Oh, he has taken the rail to his office; but he will be back long before dinner, and of course you dine with us.”

“You are very hospitable, but——”

“No buts; I will take no excuse. Don’t fear that you shall have only mutton-chops and a rice-pudding; and besides, I have a children’s party coming at two o’clock, and

there will be all sorts of fun. You are fond of children, I am sure?"

"I rather think I am not. But I have never clearly ascertained my own inclinations upon that subject."

"Well, you shall have ample opportunity to do so to-day. And oh! I promise you the sight of the loveliest face that you can picture to yourself when you think of your future wife."

"My future wife, I hope, is not yet born," said Kenelm, wearily, and with much effort suppressing a yawn. "But, at all events, I will stay till after two o'clock; for two o'clock, I presume, means luncheon."

Mrs Braefield laughed.—"You retain your appetite?"

"Most single men do, provided they don't fall in love and become doubled up."

At this abominable attempt at a pun, Mrs Braefield disdained to laugh; but turning away from its perpetrator, she took off her hat and gloves and passed her hands lightly over her forehead, as if to smooth back some

vagrant tress in locks already sufficiently sheen and trim. She was not quite so pretty in female attire as she had appeared in boy's dress, nor did she look quite as young. In all other respects she was wonderfully improved. There was a serener, a more settled intelligence in her frank bright eyes, a milder expression in the play of her parted lips. Kenelm gazed at her with pleased admiration. And as now, turning from the glass, she encountered his look, a deeper colour came into the clear delicacy of her cheeks, and the frank eyes moistened. She came up to him as he sate, and took his hand in both hers, pressing it warmly, "Ah, Mr Chillingly," she said, with impulsive tremulous tones, "look round, look round this happy peaceful home!—the life so free from a care, the husband whom I so love and honour; all the blessings that I might have so recklessly lost for ever had I not met with you, had I been punished as I deserved. How often I thought of your words, that 'you would be

proud of my friendship when we met again!'
What strength they gave me in my hours
of humbled self-reproach!" Her voice here
died away as if in the effort to suppress a
sob.

She released his hand, and before he
could answer, passed quickly through the
open sash into the garden.

CHAPTER IV.

THE children have come,—some thirty of them, pretty as English children generally are, happy in the joy of the summer sunshine, and the flower lawns, and the feast under cover of an awning suspended between chestnut-trees, and carpeted with sward.

No doubt Kenelm held his own at the banquet, and did his best to increase the general gaiety, for whenever he spoke the children listened eagerly, and when he had done they laughed mirthfully.

“The fair face I promised you,” whispered Mrs Braefield, “is not here yet. I have a little note from the young lady to say that Mrs Cameron does not feel very well this morning, but hopes to recover sufficiently to come later in the afternoon.”

“And pray who is Mrs Cameron?”

“Ah! I forgot that you are a stranger to the place. Mrs Cameron is the aunt with whom Lily resides. Is it not a pretty name, Lily?”

“Very! emblematic of a spinster that does not spin, with a white head and a thin stalk.”

“Then the name belies my Lily, as you will see.”

The children now finished their feast, and betook themselves to dancing in an alley smoothed for a croquet-ground, and to the sound of a violin played by the old grandfather of one of the party. While Mrs Braefield was busying herself with forming the dance, Kenelm seized the occasion to escape from a young nymph of the age of twelve who had sat next him at the banquet, and taken so great a fancy to him that he began to fear she would vow never to forsake his side, and stole away undetected.

There are times when the mirth of others only saddens us, especially the mirth of

children with high spirits, that jar on our own quiet mood. Gliding through a dense shrubbery, in which, though the lilacs were faded, the laburnum still retained here and there the waning gold of its clusters, Kenelm came into a recess which bounded his steps and invited him to repose. It was a circle, so formed artificially by slight trellises, to which clung parasite roses heavy with leaves and flowers. In the midst played a tiny fountain with a silvery murmuring sound ; at the background, dominating the place, rose the crests of stately trees on which the sunlight shimmered, but which rampired out all horizon beyond. Even as in life do the great dominant passions—love, ambition, desire of power, or gold, or fame, or knowledge—form the proud background to the brief-lived flowerets of our youth, lift our eyes beyond the smile of their bloom, catch the glint of a loftier sunbeam, and yet, and yet, exclude our sight from the lengths and the widths of the space which extends behind and beyond them.

Kenelm threw himself on the turf beside the fountain. From afar came the whoop and the laugh of the children in their sports or their dance. At the distance their joy did not sadden him—he marvelled why; and thus, in musing reverie, thought to explain the why to himself.

“The poet,” so ran his lazy thinking, “has told us that ‘distance lends enchantment to the view,’ and thus compares to the charm of distance the illusion of hope. But the poet narrows the scope of his own illustration. Distance lends enchantment to the ear as well as to the sight; nor to these bodily senses alone. Memory no less than hope owes its charm to ‘the far away.’

“I cannot imagine myself again a child when I am in the midst of yon noisy children. But as their noise reaches me here, subdued and mellowed, and knowing, thank Heaven! that the urchins are not within reach of me, I could readily dream myself back into childhood, and into sympathy with the lost playfields of school.

“So surely it must be with grief: how different the terrible agony for a beloved one just gone from earth, to the soft regret for one who disappeared into heaven years ago! So with the art of poetry: how imperatively, when it deals with the great emotions of tragedy, it must remove the actors from us, in proportion as the emotions are to elevate, and the tragedy is to please us by the tears it draws! Imagine our shock if a poet were to place on the stage some wise gentleman with whom we dined yesterday, and who was discovered to have killed his father and married his mother. But when *Œdipus* commits those unhappy mistakes nobody is shocked. Oxford in the nineteenth century is a long way off from Thebes 3000 or 4000 years ago.

“And,” continued Kenelm, plunging deeper into the maze of metaphysical criticism, “even where the poet deals with persons and things close upon our daily sight—if he would give them poetic charm he must resort to a sort of moral or psychological

distance; the nearer they are to us in external circumstance, the farther they must be in some internal peculiarities. Werter and Clarissa Harlowe are described as contemporaries of their artistic creation, and with the minutest details of an apparent realism; yet they are at once removed from our daily lives by their idiosyncrasies and their fates. We know that while Werter and Clarissa are so near to us in much that we sympathise with them as friends and kinsfolk, they are yet as much remote from us in the poetic and idealised side of their natures as if they belonged to the age of Homer; and this it is that invests with charm the very pain which their fate inflicts on us. Thus, I suppose, it must be in love. If the love we feel is to have the glamour of poetry, it must be love for some one morally at a distance from our ordinary habitual selves; in short, differing from us in attributes which, however near we draw to the possessor, we can never approach, never blend, in attributes of our own; so that there

is something in the loved one that always remains an ideal—a mystery—‘a sun-bright summit mingling with the sky!’”

Herewith the soliloquist’s musings slid vaguely into mere reverie. He closed his eyes drowsily, not asleep nor yet quite awake : as sometimes in bright summer days when we recline on the grass we do close our eyes, and yet dimly recognise a golden light bathing the drowsy lids ; and athwart that light images come and go like dreams, though we know that we are not dreaming.

CHAPTER V.

FROM this state, half comatose, half unconscious, Kenelm was roused slowly, reluctantly. Something struck softly on his cheek—again a little less softly; he opened his eyes—they fell first upon two tiny rosebuds, which, on striking his face, had fallen on his breast; and then, looking up, he saw before him, in an opening of the trellised circle, a female child's laughing face. Her hand was still uplifted charged with another rosebud, but behind the child's figure, looking over her shoulder and holding back the menacing arm, was a face as innocent but lovelier far—the face of a girl in her first youth, framed round with the blossoms that festooned the trellise. How the face became

the flowers! It seemed the fairy spirit of them.

Kenelm started and rose to his feet. The child, the one whom he had so ungallantly escaped from, ran towards him through a wicket in the circle. Her companion disappeared.

"Is it you?" said Kenelm to the child—"you who pelted me so cruelly? Ungrateful creature! Did I not give you the best strawberries in the dish and all my own cream?"

"But why did you run away and hide yourself when you ought to be dancing with me?" replied the young lady, evading, with the instinct of her sex, all answer to the reproach she had deserved.

"I did not run away, and it is clear that I did not mean to hide myself since you so easily found me out. But who was the young lady with you? I suspect she pelted me too, for *she* seems to have run away to hide herself."

“No, she did not pelt you ; she wanted to stop me, and you would have had another rosebud—oh, so much bigger !—if she had not held back my arm. Don’t you know her—don’t you know Lily ?”

“No ; so that is Lily ? You shall introduce me to her.”

By this time they had passed out of the circle through the little wicket opposite the path by which Kenelm had entered, and opening at once on the lawn. Here at some distance the children were grouped, some reclined on the grass, some walking to and fro, in the interval of the dance.

In the space between the group and the trellise, Lily was walking alone and quickly. The child left Kenelm’s side and ran after her friend, soon overtook, but did not succeed in arresting her steps. Lily did not pause till she had reached the grassy ball-room, and here all the children came round her and shut out her delicate form from Kenelm’s sight.

Before he had reached the place, Mrs Braefield met him.

"Lily is come!"

"I know it—I have seen her."

"Is not she beautiful?"

"I must see more of her if I am to answer critically; but before you introduce me, may I be permitted to ask who and what is Lily?"

Mrs Braefield paused a moment before she answered, and yet the answer was brief enough not to need much consideration. "She is a Miss Mordaunt, an orphan; and, as I before told you, resides with her aunt, Mrs Cameron, a widow. They have the prettiest cottage you ever saw on the banks of the river, or rather rivulet, about a mile from this place. Mrs Cameron is a very good, simple-hearted woman. As to Lily, I can praise her beauty only with safe conscience, for as yet she is a mere child—her mind quite unformed."

"Did you ever meet any man, much

less any woman, whose mind was formed?" muttered Kenelm. "I am sure mine is not, and never will be on this earth."

Mrs Braefield did not hear this low-voiced observation. She was looking about for Lily; and perceiving her at last as the children who surrounded her were dispersing to renew the dance, she took Kenelm's arm, led him to the young lady, and a formal introduction took place.

Formal as it could be on those sunlit swards, amidst the joy of summer and the laugh of children. In such scene and such circumstance, formality does not last long. I know not how it was, but in a very few minutes Kenelm and Lily had ceased to be strangers to each other. They found themselves seated apart from the rest of the merry-makers, on a bank shadowed by lime-trees; the man listening with downcast eyes, the girl with mobile shifting glances now on earth now on heaven, and talking freely, gaily—like the babble of a happy stream,

with a silvery dulcet voice, and a sparkle of rippling smiles.

No doubt this is a reversal of the formalities of well-bred life, and conventional narrating thereof. According to them, no doubt, it is for the man to talk and the maid to listen ; but I state the facts as they were, honestly. And Lily knew no more of the formalities of drawing-room life than a skylark fresh from its nest knows of the song-teacher and the cage. She was still so much of a child. Mrs Braefield was right—her mind was still so unformed.

What she did talk about in that first talk between them that could make the meditative Kenelm listen so mutely, so intently, I know not, at least I could not jot it down on paper. I fear it was very egotistical, as the talk of children generally is—about herself and her aunt, and her home and her friends—all her friends seemed children like herself, though younger—Clemmy the chief of them. Clemmy was the one who had taken a fancy to Kenelm. And amidst

all this ingenuous prattle there came flashes of a quick intellect, a lively fancy—nay, even a poetry of expression or of sentiment. It might be the talk of a child, but certainly not of a silly child.

But as soon as the dance was over, the little ones again gathered round Lily. Evidently she was the prime favourite of them all; and as her companion had now become tired of dancing, new sports were proposed, and Lily was carried off to "Prisoner's Bass."

"I am very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr Chillingly," said a frank, pleasant voice; and a well-dressed, good-looking man held out his hand to Kenelm.

"My husband," said Mrs Braefield, with a certain pride in her look.

Kenelm responded cordially to the civilities of the master of the house, who had just returned from his city office, and left all its cares behind him. You had only to look at him to see that he was prosperous, and deserved to be so. There were in his countenance the signs of strong sense, of

good-humour—above all, of an active energetic temperament. A man of broad smooth forehead, keen hazel eyes, firm lips and jaw; with a happy contentment in himself, his house, the world in general, mantling over his genial smile, and out-spoken in the metallic ring of his voice.

“You will stay and dine with us, of course,” said Mr Braefield; “and unless you want very much to be in town to-night, I hope you will take a bed here.”

Kenelm hesitated.

“Do stay at least till to-morrow,” said Mrs Braefield. Kenelm hesitated still; and while hesitating his eye rested on Lily, leaning on the arm of a middle-aged lady, and approaching the hostess—evidently to take leave.

“I cannot resist so tempting an invitation,” said Kenelm, and he fell back a little behind Lily and her companion.

“Thank you much for so pleasant a day,” said Mrs Cameron to the hostess

"Lily has enjoyed herself extremely. I only regret we could not come earlier."

"If you are walking home," said Mr Braefield, "let me accompany you. I want to speak to your gardener about his heart's-ease—it is much finer than mine."

"If so," said Kenelm to Lily, "may I come too? Of all flowers that grow, heart's-ease is the one I most prize."

A few minutes afterwards Kenelm was walking by the side of Lily along the banks of a little stream, tributary to the Thames—Mrs Cameron and Mr Braefield in advance, for the path only held two abreast.

Suddenly Lily left his side, allured by a rare butterfly—I think it is called the Emperor of Morocco—that was sunning its yellow wings upon a group of wild reeds. She succeeded in capturing this wanderer in her straw hat, over which she drew her sun-veil. After this notable capture she returned demurely to Kenelm's side.

"Do you collect insects?" said that philo-

sopher, as much surprised as it was his nature to be at anything.

"Only butterflies," answered Lily; "they are not insects, you know; they are souls."

"Emblems of souls you mean—at least, so the Greeks prettily represented them to be."

"No, real souls—the souls of infants that die in their cradles unbaptised; and if they are taken care of, and not eaten by birds, and live a year, then they pass into fairies."

"It is a very poetical idea, Miss Mordaunt, and founded on evidence quite as rational as other assertions of the metamorphosis of one creature into another. Perhaps you can do what the philosophers cannot—tell me how you learned a new idea to be an incontestable fact?"

"I don't know," replied Lily, looking very much puzzled; "perhaps I learned it in a book, or perhaps I dreamed it."

"You could not make a wiser answer if you were a philosopher. But you talk of

taking care of butterflies; how do you do that? Do you impale them on pins stuck into a glass case?"

"Impale them! How can you talk so cruelly? You deserve to be pinched by the Fairies."

"I am afraid," thought Kenelm, compassionately, "that my companion has no mind to be formed; what is euphoniously called 'an Innocent.'"

He shook his head and remained silent.

Lily resumed—

"I will show you my collection when we get home—they seem so happy. I am sure there are some of them who know me—they will feed from my hand. I have only had one die since I began to collect them last summer."

"Then you have kept them a year; they ought to have turned into fairies."

"I suppose many of them have. Of course I let out all those that had been with me twelve months—they don't turn to fairies in the cage, you know. Now I

have only those I caught this year, or last autumn ; the prettiest don't appear till the autumn."

The girl here bent her uncovered head over the straw hat, her tresses shadowing it, and uttered loving words to the prisoner. Then again she looked up and around her, and abruptly stopped, and exclaimed—

"How can people live in towns—how can people say they are ever dull in the country ? Look," she continued, gravely and earnestly—"look at that tall pine-tree, with its long branch sweeping over the water ; see how, as the breeze catches it, it changes its shadow, and how the shadow changes the play of the sunlight on the brook :—

'Wave your tops, ye pines ;

With every plant, in sign of worship wave.'

What an interchange of music there must be between Nature and a poet !"

Kenelm was startled. This 'an innocent' !—this a girl who had no mind to be formed ! In that presence he could not be cynical ;

could not speak of Nature as a mechanism, a lying humbug; as he had done to the man poet. He replied gravely—

“The Creator has gifted the whole universe with language, but few are the hearts that can interpret it. Happy those to whom it is no foreign tongue, acquired imperfectly with care and pain, but rather a native language, learned unconsciously from the lips of the great mother. To them the butterfly’s wing may well buoy into heaven a fairy’s soul!”

When he had thus said Lily turned, and for the first time attentively looked into his dark soft eyes; then instinctively she laid her light hand on his arm, and said in a low voice, “Talk on—talk thus; I like to hear you.”

But Kenelm did not talk on. They had now arrived at the garden-gate of Mrs Cameron’s cottage, and the elder persons in advance paused at the gate and walked with them to the house.

It was a long, low, irregular cottage, with-

out pretension to architectural beauty, yet exceedingly picturesque—a flower-garden, large but in proportion to the house, with parterres in which the colours were exquisitely assorted, sloping to the grassy margin of the rivulet, where the stream expanded into a lake-like basin, narrowed at either end by locks, from which with gentle sound flowed shallow waterfalls. By the banks was a rustic seat, half overshadowed by the dropping boughs of a vast willow.

The inside of the house was in harmony with the exterior—cottage-like, but with an unmistakable air of refinement about the rooms, even in the little entrance-hall, which was painted in Pompeian frescoes.

“Come and see my butterfly-cage,” said Lily, whisperingly.

Kenelm followed her through the window that opened on the garden; and at one end of a small conservatory, or rather greenhouse, was the habitation of these singular favourites. It was as large as a small room; three sides of it formed by minute wire-

work, with occasional draperies of muslin or other slight material, and covered at intervals, sometimes within, sometimes without, by dainty creepers; a tiny cistern in the centre, from which upsprang a sparkling jet. Lily cautiously lifted a sash-door and glided in, closing it behind her. Her entrance set in movement a multitude of gossamer wings, some fluttering round her, some more boldly settling on her hair or dress. Kenelm thought she had not vainly boasted when she said that some of the creatures had learned to know her. She relieved the Emperor of Morocco from her hat; it circled round her fearlessly, and then vanished amidst the leaves of the creepers. Lily opened the door and came out.

"I have heard of a philosopher who tamed a wasp," said Kenelm, "but never before of a young lady who tamed butterflies."

"No," said Lily, proudly; "I believe I am the first who attempted it. I don't think I should have attempted it if I had been told that others had succeeded before me. Not

that I have succeeded quite. No matter ; if they don't love me, I love them."

They re-entered the drawing-room, and Mrs Cameron addressed Kenelm.

"Do you know much of this part of the country, Mr Chillingly?"

"It is quite new to me, and more rural than many districts further from London."

"That is the good fortune of most of our home counties," said Mr Braefield ; "they escape the smoke and din of manufacturing towns, and agricultural science has not demolished their leafy hedgerows. The walks through our green lanes are as much bordered with convolvulus and honeysuckle as they were when Izaak Walton sauntered through them to angle in that stream!"

"Does tradition say that he angled in that stream? I thought his haunts were rather on the other side of London."

"Possibly ; I am not learned in Walton or in his art, but there is an old summer-house, on the other side of the lock yonder, on

which is carved the name of Izaak Walton, but whether by his own hand or another's who shall say? Has Mr Melville been here lately, Mrs Cameron?"

"No, not for several months."

"He has had a glorious success this year. We may hope that at last his genius is acknowledged by the world. I meant to buy his picture, but I was not in time—a Manchester man was before me."

"Who is Mr Melville? any relation to you?" whispered Kenelm to Lily.

"Relation!—I scarcely know. Yes, I suppose so, because he is my guardian. But if he were the nearest relation on earth, I could not love him more," said Lily, with impulsive eagerness, her cheeks flushing, her eyes filling with tears.

"And he is an artist—a painter?" asked Kenelm.

"Oh yes; no one paints such beautiful pictures—no one so clever, no one so kind."

Kenelm strove to recollect if he had ever heard the name of Melville as a painter, but

in vain. Kenelm, however, knew but little of painters—they were not in his way; and he owned to himself, very humbly, that there might be many a living painter of eminent renown whose name and works would be strange to him.

He glanced round the wall,—Lily interpreted his look. “There are no pictures of his here,” said she; “there is one in my own room. I will show it you when you come again.”

“And now,” said Mr Braefield, rising, “I must just have a word with your gardener, and then go home. We dine earlier here than in London, Mr Chillingly.”

As the two gentlemen, after taking leave, re-entered the hall, Lily followed them and said to Kenelm, “What time will you come to-morrow to see the picture?”

Kenelm averted his head, and then replied, not with his wonted courtesy, but briefly and brusquely—

“I fear I cannot call to-morrow. I shall be far away by sunrise.”

Lily made no answer, but turned back into the room.

Mr Braefield found the gardener watering a flower-border, conferred with him about the heart's-ease, and then joined Kenelm, who had halted a few yards beyond the garden-gate.

"A pretty little place that," said Mr Braefield, with a sort of lordly compassion, as became the owner of Braefieldville. "What I call quaint."

"Yes, quaint," echoed Kenelm, abstractedly.

"It is always the case with houses enlarged by degrees. I have heard my poor mother say that when Melville or Mrs Cameron first bought it, it was little better than a mere labourer's cottage, with a field attached to it. And two or three years afterwards a room or so more was built, and a bit of the field taken in for a garden; and then by degrees the whole part now inhabited by the family was built, leaving only the old cottage as a scullery and wash-house; and the whole field was

turned into the garden, as you see. But whether it was Melville's money or the aunt's that did it, I don't know. More likely the aunt's. I don't see what interest Melville has in the place; he does not go there often, I fancy—it is not his home."

"Mr Melville, it seems, is a painter, and, from what I heard you say, a successful one."

"I fancy he had little success before this year. But surely you saw his pictures at the Exhibition?"

"I am ashamed to say I have not been to the Exhibition."

"You surprise me. However, Melville had three pictures there—all very good; but the one I wished to buy made much more sensation than the others, and has suddenly lifted him from obscurity into fame."

"He appears to be a relation of Miss Mor-daunt's, but so distant a one, that she could not even tell me what grade of cousinship he could claim."

"Nor can I. He is her guardian, I know."

The relationship, if any, must, as you say, be very distant ; for Melville is of humble extraction, while any one can see that Mrs Cameron is a thorough gentlewoman, and Lily Mordaunt is her sister's child. I have heard my mother say that it was Melville, then a very young man, who bought the cottage, perhaps with Mrs Cameron's money ; saying it was for a widowed lady, whose husband had left her with very small means. And when Mrs Cameron arrived with Lily, then a mere infant, she was in deep mourning, and a very young woman herself,—pretty, too. If Melville had been a frequent visitor then, of course there would have been scandal ; but he very seldom came, and when he did, he lodged in a cottage, Cromwell Lodge, on the other side of the brook ; now and then bringing with him a fellow-lodger—some other young artist, I suppose, for the sake of angling. So there could be no cause for scandal, and nothing can be more blameless than poor Mrs Cameron's life. My mother, who then resided at Braefieldville, took a great

fancy to both Lily and her aunt, and when by degrees the cottage grew into a genteel sort of place, the few gentry in the neighbourhood followed my mother's example and were very kind to Mrs Cameron, so that she has now her place in the society about here, and is much liked."

"And Mr Melville?—does he still very seldom come here?"

"To say truth, he has not been at all since I settled at Braefieldville. The place was left to my mother for her life, and I was not much there during her occupation. In fact, I was then a junior partner in our firm, and conducted the branch business in New York, coming over to England for my holiday once a-year or so. When my mother died, there was much to arrange before I could settle personally in England, and I did not come to settle at Braefieldville till I married. I did see Melville on one of my visits to the place some years ago; but, between ourselves, he is not the sort of person whose intimate acquaintance one would wish to

court. My mother told me he was an idle, dissipated man, and I have heard from others that he was very unsteady. Mr——, the great painter, told me that he was a loose fish ; and I suppose his habits were against his getting on, till this year, when, perhaps by a lucky accident, he has painted a picture that raises him to the top of the tree. But is not Miss Lily wondrously nice to look at ? What a pity her education has been so much neglected !”

“Has it ?”

“Have not you discovered that already ? She has not had even a music - master, though my wife says she has a good ear, and can sing prettily enough. As for reading, I don't think she has read anything but fairy tales and poetry, and such silly stuff. However, she is very young yet ; and now that her guardian can sell his pictures, it is to be hoped that he will do more justice to his ward. Painters and actors are not so regular in their private lives as we plain men are, and great allowance is to be made

for them ; still, every one is bound to do his duty. I am sure you agree with me ?”

“Certainly,” said Kenelm, with an emphasis which startled the merchant. “That is an admirable maxim of yours : it seems a commonplace, yet how often, when it is put into our heads, it strikes as a novelty. A duty may be a very difficult thing, a very disagreeable thing, and, what is strange, it is often a very invisible thing. It is present—close before us, and yet we don’t see it ; somebody shouts its name in our ears, ‘Duty,’ and straight it towers before us a grim giant. Pardon me if I leave you—I can’t stay to dine. Duty summons me elsewhere. Make my excuses to Mrs Braefield.”

Before Mr Braefield could recover his self-possession, Kenelm had vaulted over a stile and was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

KENELM walked into the shop kept by the Somerses, and found Jessie still at the counter. "Give me back my knapsack. Thank you," he said, flinging the knapsack across his shoulders. "Now, do me a favour. A portmanteau of mine ought to be at the station. Send for it, and keep it till I give further directions. I think of going to Oxford for a day or two. Mrs Somers, one more word with you. Think, answer frankly, are you, as you said this morning, thoroughly happy, and yet married to the man you loved?"

"Oh, so happy!"

"And wish for nothing beyond? Do not wish Will to be other than he is?"

"God forbid! You frighten me, sir."

"Frighten you! Be it so. Every one who is happy should be frightened, lest happiness fly away. Do your best to chain it, and you will, for you attach Duty to Happiness; and," muttered Kenelm, as he turned from the shop, "Duty is sometimes not a rose-coloured tie, but a heavy iron-hued clog."

He strode on through the street towards the sign-post with "To Oxford" inscribed thereon. And whether he spoke literally of the knapsack, or metaphorically of Duty, he murmured, as he strode—

"A pedlar's pack that bows the bearer down."

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM might have reached Oxford that night, for he was a rapid and untirable pedestrian ; but he halted a little after the moon rose, and laid himself down to rest beneath a new-mown haystack, not very far from the highroad.

He did not sleep. Meditatingly propped on his elbow, he said to himself—

“It is long since I have wondered at nothing. I wonder now : can this be love—really love—unmistakably love? Pooh! it is impossible ; the very last person in the world to be in love with. Let us reason upon it—you, myself, and I. To begin with—face ! What is face ? In a few years the most beautiful face may be very plain. Take the Venus at Florence. Animate her ; see her

ten years after; a chignon, front teeth (blue or artificially white), mottled complexion, double chin—all that sort of plump prettiness goes into double chin. Face, bah! What man of sense—what pupil of Welby, the realist—can fall in love with a face? and even if I were simpleton enough to do so, pretty faces are as common as daisies. Cecilia Travers has more regular features; Jessie Wiles a richer colouring. I was not in love with them—not a bit of it. Myself, you have nothing to say there. Well, then, mind? Talk of mind, indeed! a creature whose favourite companionship is that of butterflies, and who tells me that butterflies are the souls of infants unbaptised. What an article for ‘The Londoner,’ on the culture of young women. What a girl for Miss Garrett and Miss Emily Faithfull! Put aside Mind as we have done Face. What rests?—the Frenchman’s ideal of happy marriage? congenial circumstance of birth, fortune, tastes, habits. Worse still. Myself, answer honestly, are you not floored?”

Whereon "Myself" took up the parable and answered—"O thou fool! why wert thou so ineffably blest in one presence? Why, in quitting that presence, did Duty become so grim? Why dost thou address to me those inept pedantic questionings, under the light of yon moon, which has suddenly ceased to be to thy thoughts an astronomical body, and has become, for ever and for ever, identified in thy heart's dreams with romance and poesy and first love? Why, instead of gazing on that uncomfortable orb, art thou not quickening thy steps towards a cozy inn and a good supper at Oxford? Kenelm, my friend, thou art in for it. No disguising the fact—thou art in love!"

"I'll be hanged if I am," said the Second in the Dualism of Kenelm's mind; and therewith he shifted his knapsack into a pillow, turned his eyes from the moon, and still could not sleep. The face of Lily still haunted his eyes—the voice of Lily still rang in his ears.

Oh, my reader! dost thou here ask me.

to tell thee what Lily was like?—was she dark, was she fair, was she tall, was she short? Never shalt thou learn these secrets from me. Imagine to thyself the being to which thine whole of life, body and mind and soul, moved irresistibly as the needle to the pole. Let her be tall or short, dark or fair, she is that which out of all womankind has suddenly become the one woman for thee. Fortunate art thou, my reader, if thou chance to have heard the popular song of “My Queen” sung by the one lady who alone can sing it with expression worthy the verse of the poetess and the music of the composition, by the sister of the exquisite songstress. But if thou hast not heard the verse thus sung, to an accompaniment thus composed, still the words themselves are, or ought to be, familiar to thee, if thou art, as I take for granted, a lover of the true lyrical muse. Recall then the words supposed to be uttered by him who knows himself destined to do homage to one he has not yet beheld :—

“ She is standing somewhere—she I shall honour,
She that I wait for, my queen, my queen;
Whether her hair be golden or raven,
Whether her eyes be hazel or blue,
I know not now, it will be engraven
Some day hence as my loveliest hue.

She may be humble or proud, my lady,
Or that sweet calm which is just between;
But whenever she comes, she will find me ready
To do her homagè, my queen, my queen.”

Was it possible that the cruel boy-god
“ who sharpens his arrows on the whetsone of
the human heart ” had found the moment to
avenge himself for the neglect of his altars
and the scorn of his power! Must that
redoubted knight-errant, the hero of this
tale, despite The Three Fishes on his charmed
shield, at last veil the crest and bow the
knee, and murmur to himself, “She has
come, my queen”!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning Kenelm arrived at Oxford—"Verum secretumque Mouseion."

If there be a place in this busy island which may distract the passions of youth from love to scholarship, to Ritualism, to mediæval associations, to that sort of poetical sentiment or poetical fanaticism which a Mivers and a Welby and an advocate of the Realistic School would hold in contempt—certainly that place is Oxford. Home, nevertheless, of great thinkers and great actors in the practical world.

The vacation had not yet commenced, but the commencement was near at hand. Kenelm thought he could recognise the leading men by their slower walk and more abstracted expression of countenance.

Among the fellows was the eminent author of that book which had so powerfully fascinated the earlier adolescence of Kenelm Chillingly, and who had himself been subject to the fascination of a yet stronger spirit. The Rev. Decimus Roach had been ever an intense and reverent admirer of John Henry Newman—an admirer, I mean, of the pure and lofty character of the man, quite apart from sympathy with his doctrines. But although Roach remained an unconverted Protestant of orthodox, if High Church, creed, yet there was one tenet he did hold in common with the author of the 'Apologia.' He ranked celibacy among the virtues most dear to Heaven. In that eloquent treatise, 'The Approach to the Angels,' he not only maintained that the state of single blessedness was strictly incumbent on every member of a Christian priesthood, but to be commended to the adoption of every conscientious layman.

It was the desire to confer with this eminent theologian that had induced Kenelm to direct his steps to Oxford.

Mr Roach was a friend of Welby's, at whose house, when a pupil, Kenelm had once or twice met him, and been even more charmed by his conversation than by his treatise. Kenelm called on Mr Roach, who received him very graciously, and not being a tutor or examiner, placed his time at Kenelm's disposal; took him the round of the colleges and the Bodleian; invited him to dine in his college-hall; and after dinner led him into his own rooms, and gave him an excellent bottle of Chateau Margeaux.

Mr Roach was somewhere about fifty—a good-looking man, and evidently thought himself so, for he wore his hair long behind and parted in the middle; which is not done by men who form modest estimates of their personal appearance.

Kenelm was not long in drawing out his host on the subject to which that profound thinker had devoted so much meditation.

"I can scarcely convey to you," said Kenelm, "the intense admiration with which I have studied your noble work, 'Approach

to the Angels.' It produced a great effect on me in the age between boyhood and youth. But of late some doubts on the universal application of your doctrine have crept into my mind."

"Ay, indeed?" said Mr Roach, with an expression of interest in his face.

"And I come to you for their solution."

Mr Roach turned away his head, and pushed the bottle to Kenelm.

"I am quite willing to concede," resumed the heir of the Chillinglys, "that a priesthood should stand apart from the distracting cares of a family, and pure from all carnal affections."

"Hem, hem," grunted Mr Roach, taking his knee on his lap and caressing it.

"I go farther," continued Kenelm, "and supposing with you that the Confessional has all the importance, whether in its monitory or its cheering effects upon repentant sinners, which is attached to it by the Roman Catholics, and that it ought to be no less cultivated by the Reformed Church, it

seems to me essential that the Confessor should have no better half to whom it can be even suspected he may, in an unguarded moment, hint at the frailties of one of her female acquaintances."

"I pushed that argument too far," murmured Roach.

"Not a bit of it. Celibacy in the Confessor stands or falls with the Confessional. Your argument there is as sound as a bell. But when it comes to the layman, I think I detect a difference."

Mr Roach shook his head, and replied stoutly, "No; if celibacy be incumbent on the one, it is equally incumbent on the other. I say 'if.'"

"Permit me to deny that assertion. Do not fear that I shall insult your understanding by the popular platitude—viz., that if celibacy were universal, in a very few years the human race would be extinct. As you have justly observed, in answer to that fallacy, 'It is the duty of each human soul to strive towards the highest perfection of the

spiritual state for itself, and leave the fate of the human race to the care of the Creator.' If celibacy be necessary to spiritual perfection, how do we know but that it may be the purpose and decree of the All Wise that the human race, having attained to that perfection, should disappear from earth? Universal celibacy would thus be the euthanasia of mankind. On the other hand, if the Creator decided that the human race, having culminated to this crowning but barren flower of perfection, should nevertheless continue to increase and multiply upon earth, have you not victoriously exclaimed, 'Presumptuous mortal! how canst thou presume to limit the resources of the Almighty? Would it not be easy for Him to continue some other mode, unexposed to trouble and sin and passion, as in the nuptials of the vegetable world, by which the generations will be renewed? Can we suppose that the angels—the immortal companies of heaven—are not hourly increasing in number, and extending their populations throughout infinity?

and yet in heaven there is no marrying nor giving in marriage.'—All this, clothed by you in words which my memory only serves me to quote imperfectly—all this I unhesitatingly concede."

Mr Roach rose and brought another bottle of the Chateau Margeaux from his cellaret, filled Kenelm's glass, reseated himself, and took the other knee into his lap to caress.

"But," resumed Kenelm, "my doubt is this."

"Ha!" cried Mr Roach, "let us hear the doubt."

"In the first place, is celibacy essential to the highest state of spiritual perfection? and, in the second place, if it were, are mortals, as at present constituted, capable of that culmination?"

"Very well put," said Mr Roach, and he tossed off his glass with more cheerful aspect than he had hitherto exhibited.

"You see," said Kenelm, "we are compelled in this, as in other questions of philosophy, to resort to the inductive process, and draw

our theories from the facts within our cognisance. Now, looking round the world, is it the fact that old maids and old bachelors are so much more spiritually advanced than married folks? Do they pass their time, like an Indian dervish, in serene contemplation of divine excellence and beatitude? Are they not quite as worldly in their own way as persons who have been married as often as the Wife of Bath, and, generally speaking, more selfish, more frivolous, and more spiteful? I am sure I don't wish to speak uncharitably against old maids and old bachelors. I have three aunts who are old maids, and fine specimens of the genus; but I am sure they would all three have been more agreeable companions, and quite as spiritually gifted, if they had been happily married, and were caressing their children instead of lap-dogs. So, too, I have an old bachelor-cousin, Chillingly Mivers, whom you know. As clever as a man can be. But, Lord bless you! as to being wrapt in spiritual meditation,

he could not be more devoted to the things of earth if he had married as many wives as Solomon, and had as many children as Priam. Finally, have not half the mistakes in the world arisen from a separation between the spiritual and the moral nature of man? Is it not, after all, through his dealings with his fellow-men that man makes his safest 'approach to the angels'? And is not the moral system a very muscular system? Does it not require for healthful vigour plenty of continued exercise, and does it not get that exercise naturally, by the relationships of family, with all the wider collateral struggles with life which the care of family necessitates?

"I put these questions to you with the humblest diffidence. I expect to hear such answers as will thoroughly convince my reason, and I shall be delighted if so. For at the root of the controversy lies the passion of love. And love must be a very disquieting troublesome emotion, and has led many

heroes and sages into wonderful weaknesses and follies."

"Gently, gently, Mr Chillingly; don't exaggerate. Love, no doubt, is—ahem—a disquieting passion. Still, every emotion that changes life from a stagnant pool into the freshness and play of a running stream is disquieting to the pool. Not only love and its fellow-passions—such as ambition—but the exercise of the reasoning faculty, which is always at work in changing our ideas, is very disquieting. Love, Mr Chillingly, has its good side as well as its bad. Pass the bottle."

KENELM (passing the bottle).—"Yes, yes; you are quite right in putting the adversary's case strongly before you demolish it—all good rhetoricians do that. Pardon me if I am up to that trick in argument. Assume that I know all that can be said in favour of the abnegation of common-sense, euphoniouly called 'love,' and proceed to the demolition of the case."

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH (hesitatingly).—

"The demolition of the case? humph! The passions are ingrafted in the human system as part and parcel of it, and are not to be demolished so easily as you seem to think. Love, taken rationally and morally by a man of good education and sound principles, is—is——"

KENELM.—"Well, is what?"

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH.—"A—a—a— thing not to be despised. Like the sun, it is the great colourist of life, Mr Chillingly. And you are so right—the moral system does require daily exercise. What can give that exercise to a solitary man, when he arrives at the practical age in which he cannot sit for six hours at a stretch musing on the divine essence; and rheumatism or other ailments forbid his adventure into the wilds of Africa as a missionary? At that age, Nature, which will be heard, Mr Chillingly, demands her rights. A sympathising female companion by one's side; innocent little children climbing one's knee,—lovely, bewitching picture! Who can be Goth enough

to rub it out, who fanatic enough to paint over it the image of a St Simon sitting alone on a pillar! Take another glass. You don't drink enough, Mr Chillingly."

"I have drunk enough," replied Kenelm, in a sullen voice, "to think I see double. I imagined that before me sate the austere adversary of the insanity of love and the miseries of wedlock. Now, I fancy I listen to a puling sentimentalist uttering the platitudes which the other Decimus Roach had already refuted. Certainly either I see double, or you amuse yourself with mocking my appeal to your wisdom."

"Not so, Mr Chillingly. But the fact is, that when I wrote that book of which you speak, I was young, and youth is enthusiastic and one-sided. Now, with the same disdain of the excesses to which love may hurry weak intellects, I recognise its benignant effects when taken, as I before said, rationally—taken rationally, my young friend. At that period of life when the judgment is matured, the soothing companionship of an

amiable female cannot but cheer the mind, and prevent that morose hoar-frost into which solitude is chilled and made rigid by increasing years. In short, Mr Chillingly, having convinced myself that I erred in the opinion once too rashly put forth, I owe it to Truth, I owe it to Mankind, to make my conversion known to the world. And I am about next month to enter into the matrimonial state with a young lady who——”

“Say no more, say no more, Mr Roach. It must be a painful subject to you. Let us drop it.”

“It is not a painful subject at all!” exclaimed Mr Roach, with warmth. “I look forward to the fulfilment of my duty with the pleasure which a well-trained mind always ought to feel in recanting a fallacious doctrine. But you do me the justice to understand that of course I do not take this step I propose—for my personal satisfaction. No, sir, it is the value of my example to others, which purifies my motives and animates my soul.”

After this concluding and noble sentence, the conversation drooped. Host and guest both felt they had had enough of each other. Kenelm soon rose to depart.

Mr Roach, on taking leave of him at the door, said, with marked emphasis—

“Not for my personal satisfaction—remember that. Whenever you hear my conversion discussed in the world, say that from my own lips you heard these words—NOT FOR MY PERSONAL SATISFACTION. No! My kind regards to Welby—a married man himself, and a father; *he* will understand me.”

CHAPTER IX.

ON quitting Oxford, Kenelm wandered for several days about the country, advancing to no definite goal, meeting with no noticeable adventure. At last he found himself mechanically retracing his steps. A magnetic influence he could not resist drew him back towards the grassy meads and the sparkling rill of Moleswich.

"There must be," said he to himself, "a mental, like an optical, illusion. In the last, we fancy we have seen a spectre. If we dare not face the apparition—dare not attempt to touch it—run superstitiously away from it—what happens? We shall believe to our dying day that it was not an illusion—that it was a spectre—and so we may be crazed for life. But if we manfully

walk up to the Phantom, stretch our hands to seize it, lo ! it fades into thin air, the cheat of our eyesight is dispelled, and we shall never be ghost-ridden again. So it must be with this mental illusion of mine. I see an image strange to my experience—it seems to me, at that first sight, clothed with a supernatural charm ; like an unreasoning coward, I run away from it. It continues to haunt me ; I cannot shut out its apparition. It pursues me by day alike in the haunts of men—alike in the solitudes of nature ; it visits me by night in my dreams. I begin to say this must be a real visitant from another world—it must be love—the love of which I read in the Poets, as in the Poets I read of witchcraft and ghosts. Surely I must approach that apparition as a philosopher like Sir David Brewster would approach the black cat seated on a hearth-rug, which he tells us that some lady of his acquaintance constantly saw till she went into a world into which black cats are not held to be admitted. The more I think of it the

less it appears to me possible that I can be really in love with a wild, half-educated, anomalous creature, merely because the apparition of her face haunts me. With perfect safety, therefore, I can approach that creature ; in proportion as I see more of her, the illusion will vanish. I will go back to Moleswich manfully."

Thus said Kenelm to himself, and himself answered—

"Go ; for thou canst not help it. Thinkest thou that Daces can escape the net that has meshed a Roach ? No—

'Come it will, the day decreed by fate,'

when thou must succumb to the 'nature which will be heard.' Better succumb now, and with a good grace, than resist till thou hast reached thy fiftieth year, and then make a rational choice not for thy personal satisfaction."

Whereupon Kenelm answered to himself, indignantly, "Pooh ! thou flippant. My *alter ego*, thou knowest not what thou

art talking about ! It is not a question of nature ; it is a question of the supernatural—an illusion—a phantom ! ”

Thus Kenelm and himself continued to quarrel with each other ; and the more they quarrelled, the nearer they approached to the haunted spot in which had been seen, and fled from, the fatal apparition of first love.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







